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A Gang of Pecksniffs

Edited and with an introduction by Theo Lippman, Jr.

Letters of H.L. Mencken

Edited by Guy J. Forgue

Both by H. L. Mencken

Reviewed by Randy Boehm / *Gang* / Arlington House, 1975 / $8.95 / *Letters* / Knopf, 1961 / $12.50

Over the years, American journalism has distinguished itself, if in no other way, by the striking individualists that haunt the profession. From William Randolph Hearst to Bill Loeb (perhaps the last of the dying breed), the field has produced one redoubtable individualist after another. Certainly one of the foremost trophies in this grand tradition is that of H. L. Mencken, whose libertarian forays into the American intellectual market still leave profound influence. It was Mencken who smashed the censorship of the mails, and it was Mencken who nursed the irreverent writings of Dreiser and Anderson, of Shaw and Nietzsche, of Anatole France and James Joyce, and of Sinclair Lewis and James Branch Cabell into popularity in America. And not least of all, it was Mencken's *American Mercury* that established the spirit of cynicism toward democracy and politicians that was to become the mood of the "Roaring Twenties" and the credo of "the Forgotten Man."

It is not only as a "doer" that Mencken stands out, however, but as an individual with extraordinary courage and exceptional style. He often battled against formidable odds in his fights against censorship, prohibition, and "brain trust" mandarins. His personal and professional security were often threatened, but he displayed remarkable strength in his disregard of danger. His was a Nietzschean contempt mingled with Rabelaisian playfulness. Once, he bound and published a volume of violent and outrageous attacks on himself by editorialists around the country, reaping a personal profit from their vitriolic efforts. Time and again throughout his long career, he resorted to comedy to gain the upper hand in

affairs that would have crushed lesser men.

At any rate, it is high time that Mencken's ruminations on journalism find their way to public reassessment. Of all his many positions, Mencken wished most to be remembered as a "newspaperman." One finds the selections in *A Gang of Pecksniffs* uncharacteristically earnest, and so it seems indeed that HLM felt that he had a serious contribution to make to the field. This is not to say that the usual Mencken erudition and charm are in any way absent in the present volume. On the contrary, these writings, many of which are culled from once published newspaper columns live up to Mencken's cardinal principle of journalism: be amusing.

So long as journalism must by its very nature be a popular art form, why not give the populace the show it so deeply craves? Why not, indeed, thought Mencken. Since there is an inevitable subjectivity operating in reporting, the journalist should not waste it on a dull arrangement of facts. Better to breathe life into the story, to narrate as well as report. That, Mencken felt, is the key to good journalism. Nor did he feel that this approach would lead to journalistic irresponsibility. He seemed convinced that the profession was undergoing a sort of Darwinian teleology, that the lot of the journalist was improving with each generation. He noted that intelligent, educated, and catholic reporters were everywhere replacing the chronic drunks who infested the profession at the turn of the century. On this note of optimism, he concluded that the individual journalist would exercise his interpreter's license in a responsible way. If anything, the vested interests of the publisher threaten to pervert the reporter's account. Left to the devices of his own style, however, the reporter can be trusted to entertain without corrupting the facts too much.

Mencken's second cardinal principle is political: Resist political propaganda from established politicians as well as from so-called reformers. In a memo to Paul Patterson, editor of the *Baltimore Sun* in 1937, Mencken wrote, "As for our general policy, I think it should be anti-Administration at all times . . . . [It should bring] . . . the power of sound information and impartial honesty against the immense effects of government propaganda, with its constant appeals to the lowest credulities of the people . . . ." But the antiestablishmentarianism was tempered with an aristocratic suspicion of radicals: "I believe that the safe and rational course of the papers themselves is liberalism . . . . We should fight resolutely at all times for the chief liberal goods, all of them well tested and of the highest virtue, e.g., the limitation of governmental powers . . . and a press secure against official pressure. There is nothing for a decent paper in radicalism. If it suceeds in this country our function will be gone, and with it our liberties. They will be gone whether the radicalism that comes is from the Right or from the Left."

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A Word to Our Readers

• As announced here in our last issue, a six issue subscription to *LR* is now $8, saving you $1 over the single-copy price. Extra copies of any issue are $1.50, 5 copies for $6, 10 for $10, 50 for $37.50, and 100 for $60. Just use the handy order form below.

• **New cassette selections from Audio-Forum** include Nathaniel Branden's recent speech to the 1976 Libertarian Party convention, *How to Communicate Political Ideas.* No libertarian should be without this tape. Order Tape 732 (55 min.) for $9.95 *directly* from Audio-Forum, 901 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.

• Also available is Roger MacBride's LP convention banquet address, in which he brought libertarians up to date on the efforts of his campaign and the party's progress. Order Tape 731 (51 min.) for $9.95 *directly* from Audio-Forum.

• *Snollygoster:* A burgeoning politician with no platform, principles, or party preference.—*Mrs. Byrne's Dictionary of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words.*

• The *Wall Street Review of Books* has recently published a two-volume set of the proceedings of the American Geographical Society's Symposium on Geographical Aspects of Inflationary Processes. Included are papers by Murray N. Rothbard, Walter E. Grinder, Ludwig M. Lachmann, Henry Hazlitt, and Phillip Cagan. The set is available for $11.90, postpaid, from Redgrave Publishing Company, 430 Manville Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

• A number of our friends have asked us what Robert LeFevre, former president of Rampart College, is up to these days. Well, as always, Bob is busy being a free man, currently as publisher of *LeFevre's Journal,* a sprightly presentation of "one man's point of view." The *Journal* "is not for sale, but is supplied to those who are dedicated to human liberty when those so dedicated make it possible." Write for it at PO Box 2353, Orange, CA 92669.

• Laissez Faire Books is having a special on odds 'n ends:

American Liberalism and World Politics (2 volumes) by James J. Martin. This is *the* definitive study of pre-World War II American foreign policy. Regular price: $22.50. **Special: only $15.**

Les Miserables by Victor Hugo. Regular price: $7.45. **Special: only $5.**

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Send your order (be sure to enclose $.75 to cover postage and handling) directly to Laissez Faire Books, Dept. 1176, 206 Mercer Street, New York, NY 10012.

• The Center for Libertarian Studies has a new address: 200 Park Avenue South, Suite 911, New York, NY 10003.

• Ayn Rand was interviewed in mid-September by a panel of college students for the radio program "Focus on Youth." To obtain a written transcript of the program, send a stamped, self-addressed, business-size envelope to Focus on Youth, PO Box 6460, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648. *Be sure to indicate that you want the transcript of the Rand interview.*

• **Things to Come:** George H. Smith on the classic works of freethought, Tibor Machan on *Must We Mean What We Say?* and *The Senses of Walden,* Gerald H. Dubin on Dr. Peter Breggin's cassette recording, *Libertarian Foundations for Personal Conduct and Happiness,* and William H. Stoddard on *The Evolution of Law and Order.* Also in the works: Jerry Pournelle on Petr Beckmann's *Health Hazards of Not Going Nuclear,* Roy Childs on R. W. K. Paterson's *The Nihilist Egoist: Max Stirner* and Stirner's own *The Ego and His Own,* Bill Danks on *Behavior Mod,* Alan Fairgate on *The Last Days of the Club,* Regina Hugo on *The Creative Process, The Creative Experience,* and *Creativity and Personal Freedom.* And more!

Contributors
IN THIS ISSUE

Randy Boehm, a long-time connoisseur of the writings and ideas of HLM, is currently a Fellow at the Institute for Humane Studies, where he is writing his master's thesis, "The Legal Philosophy of Justice William O. Douglas." **David Brudnoy** is a syndicated columnist, TV and radio personality, and freelance. He writes on film and books for various journals. **Roy A. Childs, Jr.,** is a former editor and associate editor of *Libertarian Review.* He is the author of hundreds of articles and reviews. **William Danks** is a PhD candidate in political science at the University of Hawaii and director of the university's Human Rights Project. **Walter E. Grinder** is executive director of the Center for Libertarian Studies and an *LR* associate editor. **David Kantorowitz** is an assistant professor of psychology at California State College (San Bernardino). **Felix Morley** is currently writing the memoirs of his long and active life. He is a Pulitzer Prize winner, a former Rhodes Scholar, founding editor of *Human Events*, and the author of many books. **Jeff Riggenbach** is book critic for the Los Angeles all-news radio station KFWB. **B.A. Rogge,** a leading libertarian economist, is Distinguished Professor of Political Economy at Wabash College. "Adam Smith: 1776-1976" was first presented as part of the Hillsdale College Ludwig von Mises Lecture Series. It is reprinted here, slightly revised, from *Imprimis,* a publication of the Center for Constructive Alternatives, Hillsdale College. **E. Scott Royce** works for the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation and is editor/publisher of *Southern Libertarian Review.* **Steven Utley** is a freelance writer and reviewer. His fiction has appeared in *Galaxy* and other magazines. His first book (ed., with Geo. W. Proctor), *Lone Star Universe,* an anthology of speculative fiction and fantasy by Texas writers, is just out from Heidelberg Publishers.

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Defending the Undefendable?

Jim Davidson's review of Walter Block's blockbusting Defending the Undefendable (LR, *Jul.-Aug. '76) and Walter E. Grinder's comments on the book in his "Libertarian Cross-Currents" in our last issue evoked some rather strong reactions. They appear in full in this special section, along with a reply by Mr. Davidson.*

From the Readers . . .

I found Walter Block's *Defending the Undefendable* delightful. It's a shame that Jim Davidson wasn't able to enjoy the book quite as much. He really ought to loosen his necktie a bit.

I have a great deal of sympathy for Mr. Davidson's exasperation with the unevenness of the book. Some chapters are divided into sections—denoted variously by italicized subheads, boldface subheads, numbered plain-type subheads, and bare numerals—while other longer chapters go undivided. This is unfortuante and indeed sloppy editing.

I cannot share Mr. Davidson's indignance over the alledged continual misuse of the terms "hero" and "heroic." Davidson laments "the silly and pointless reiteration of a claim to heroism for each species of rogue" when in fact only seven of the book's thirty-two rogues are referred to as "hero" or "heroic." Even in those cases Block's use of the term "hero" (the meaning of and the reasons for which he -unlike Davidson—spells out very clearly) is not so far out of the ordinary as the reviewer believes. Davidson's personally preferred definition of hero as "a man of superhuman strength or ability . . . favored by the gods . . . famous on account of his great and noble deeds" captures only part of the concept. My dictionary *(Webster's Universal)* also defines hero as a man of "valor, intrepidity, or enterprise in danger." This last quality—enterprise in the face of danger—is a quality clearly possessed by many of Block's scapegoats.

Several of the book's characters are actually (albeit hesitantly, since revulsion is the attitude common to prohibitionists) scorned by Block. Nowhere does he argue that the drug addict is "admirable," as Davidson alludes; he argues only that the addict has rights.

Perhaps Davidson's generally stuffy attitude toward *Defending the Undefendable*, especially his worry that the nonlibertarian reader will be "thoroughly alienated" by the freewheeling work, reflects a divergence between his strategic outlook and that of the book's author. Stuffiness certainly has its place. But I do hope that there is room enough in the libertarian movement for both National Taxpayers Union gradualism and Block's economic shock therapy.

LAWRENCE H. WHITE
Moorestown, N.J.

I really must protest Jim Davidson's scurrilous attack on Walter Block's *Defending the Undefendable*. Like it or not, Walter Block's work is a brilliant addition to the libertarian corpus, and it forces us, again and again, to rethink our legal and moral prejudices. There is a *reason* why the book has been endorsed—sometimes with wild enthusiasm—by such figures as F.A. Hayek, Robert Nozick, Thomas Szasz, Harry Browne, Robert Kephart, Albert Ellis, Roger MacBride, John Hospers, and Murray Rothbard. That reason is, simply, that Block has risen to defend the *least attractive* representatives of certain principles, and he has done so with wit, flamboyance, and a great deal of nerve. Hayek, hardly a young, freaked-out radical, let alone an adherent to the mysterious tenets of S & M, has said that Block has performed a "real service," by disabusing people of their prejudices, and has claimed that it will do people good "even if they hate it." I agree completely.

The interesting thing to me is that Davidson finds it necessary to focus on a part of the book which is almost an afterthought, and is certainly no more than a slap in the face to get people to think: Block's occasional labelling of despised deviants as "heroic." Davidson devotes nearly half his review to moaning about this deed. Yet at best Block devotes one or two sentences per chapter to this claim. The only people I know who find it necessary to mutter or wail about this are *other libertarians.* It has not been an issue on the dozen or so radio and television shows which Block has visited in the New York City area as part of the promotion of his book. It has not been an issue to hostile reviewers (other than Davidson). It has not been an issue with Prof. Block's students, many of whom have been entranced by Libertarianism as a result of reading the book. In short, *no one else* finds it necessary to harp on the admittedly red-flag use of the term "heroic," with which I also disagree. There is much more to the substance of the book than this! There may be justified stylistic complaints against the book, though I think such a focus is petty, but against which Libertarian works may such a complaint *not* be made? *Defending the Undefendable* is a political tract, not a literary exercise. And, as a political tract, it is a damned good one. Certainly we might well cringe when reading it, but I for one think we should also welcome it with open arms.

ROY A. CHILDS, JR.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

From the Author . . .

In his commentary which appears in *Defending the Undefendable,* F.A. Hayek warned that the book would cost me the good will of the majority of popular opinion, and that "some may find it too strong a medicine." I had to agree with the Nobel Prize-winning economist; after all, the book defends a whole host of people the American Civil Liberties Union wouldn't touch with a ten-foot pole. But I always thought that Hayek was referring to the great hordes of the *nonlibertarian* populace. With the publication of James Davidson's comment on *Defending the Undefendable* in *Libertarian Review,* however, I can now see that the warning applies to libertarians as well.

Describing himself as "warmly disposed toward both the author and his *thesis,*" Davidson begins, however, by attacking the writing style of the book as not equal to the artistry of a George Bernard Shaw! From this unfortunate but undeniable fact, Davidson concludes that the book is the "plodding presentation of a mere *technician.*"

The truth is, of course, that there is a vast middle ground between the dull plodding effort of the technician and the brilliance of the true artist. Failure to hit the pinnacle does not logically consign a work to the depths. But what reason can Davidson have for taking this stance in the first place? Is it *fair* to attack a political-philosophical treatise for not being a "*work of art*"?

Another point that seems particularly troublesome to Mr. Davidson is my supposed misuse of the word "hero." Although only a miniscule part of the book even mentions heroism, he spends no less than 40 percent of his brief review lambasting me for this, repeating the point a wearisome sixteen times. Curiously though, Mr. Davison finds no time to mention the *reasoning* behind my choice

(Continued on page 18)

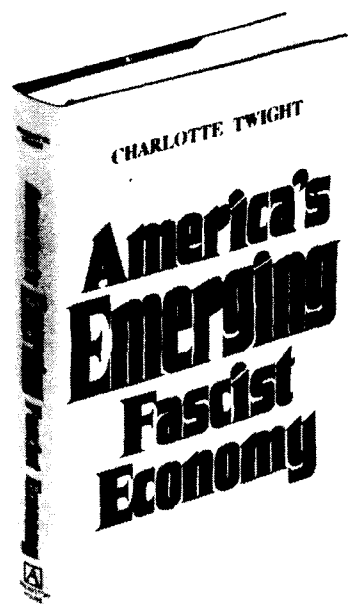
Is America turning fascist?

Is the United States turning fascist? Most Americans are angered by the charge, which in recent years has issued from leftist revolutionaries screaming "Fascist Amerika" at everyone who disagrees with them.

The irony, says this brilliant young writer, is that America *is* developing into a fascist state; but it is these same leftists who are pointing the way.

Realizing that this is a subject usually approached with more emotion than reason, Charlotte Twight first defines fascism. She describes its typical policies on inflation, wage and price controls, government licensing, cartels, production decrees, quantity and quality controls, labor, imports and exports, and national self-sufficiency. She then shows how similar policies are emerging in the United States, citing specific laws by which the government asserts economic powers parallel to fascist models.

Dr. Twight acknowledges that fascism differs from socialism and communism in that it relies, at least nominally, on capitalism. But it is a capitalism with more than a dash of collectivism, a capitalism far removed from traditional American private enterprise. This "capitalism" fast becomes a tool in the hands of the politicians and bureaucrats.



The fruits of fascism, says Dr. Twight, are a drastically reduced standard of living, increased potential for war (the inevitable results of fascism's international economic policies), and, above all, a psychology of individual dependence upon government in all realms of life. She warns that "Government licensing, government contracts, wage and price controls, manipulation of the money supply, rationing—all of these are overt mechanisms creating actual, tangible economic dependence. A more subtle consequence of fascism is to make people psychologically dependent on the government for their economic well-being. As a fascist government increasingly usurps the functions of private enterprise in providing such daily necessities of its citizens as health care, food, housing, energy, and insurance, the individual becomes acutely aware that his survival is dependent upon governmental decisions that he as an individual cannot significantly influence."

SIGNPOSTS ON THE ROAD TO FASCISM

- The constitutional foundation for American fascism
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- Acceleration of fascist economic policies, 1973-74
- Compulsory labeling laws: why they fool the public
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- Autarky: why it brings a lower standard of living
- *U.S.* v. *Darby* (1941) and *Wickard* v. *Filburn* (1942): how these decisions of the FDR Court reflect the premises of a fascist state
- American cartels
- Why the problem is not *corrupt* government officials, but the power given even to high-minded officials
- Government licensing as an economic weapon
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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Troubled Partnership: A Re-Appraisal of the Atlantic Alliance

By Henry A. Kissinger

Reviewed by Felix Morley / Council on Foreign Relations & McGraw-Hill, 1965 / $8.95

It is ironic that, along with our bicentennial celebrations, the hopes for unification of Western Europe have become so dim. There must be reasons why a United States of America could be formed while the emergence of a United States of Europe remains a dream.

Yet those which occur offhand are not convincing. Certainly there was no language difficulty in the 13 American colonies. All of them had been similarly subject to the British crown. All of them had joined, in greater or lesser degree, in the revolutionary undertaking. These factors, of course, contributed to a political union that nevertheless took much effort and compromise to achieve.

> "The most potent impediment to the unification of Western Europe... has been the protective shield of the United States."

On the other hand, Ireland and Italy are today in much closer communication than were Georgia and Massachusetts two centuries ago. Now, as then, political leadership recognizes that "in Union is Strength." Elements from every European country have been able to merge fraternally in the American melting pot. Not less important because often forgotten, there is a heritage of unity throughout Western Europe. All of that area was once politically united under the Roman emperors, and for a thousand years it remained spiritually unified through the Roman Church.

Consequently, there seems no good reason why these contiguous states should not have federated, once time had tamed the nationalistic hatred of their essentially civil wars. And it was widely expected that the European Economic Community, better known as the Common Market, would lead steadily towards this envisaged end. As President Kennedy put it on May 17, 1962, "The debate now raging in Europe echoes on a grand scale the debates which took place in this country between 1783 and 1789." Why discussion achieved union here, while failing dismally over there, is a tangled story. But one of the principal factors was closely examined by Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, while he was still a professor of government at Harvard, in his book *The Troubled Partnership.* Although Dr. K is now on the way out as secretary of state, his cogent argument is not for that reason less valid today than it was in 1965.

As this shrewd observer saw it then, the big difficulty confronting NATO was the disparity of strength between the United States and the European members of this Atlantic alliance. But when the alliance was formed in 1949, this disparity was a basic reason for its creation. The shield of American protection against any further Russian aggrandizement seemed essential for the war-shattered economies of Western Europe. Few then objected to our continued military occupation.

With the rapid economic recovery of Western Europe, however, its people began to become resentful of the conspicuous American presence. By the Treaty of Rome (1957) European statesmen showed themselves willing and able to develop their own reorganization through a customs union, and later an adjacent free trade area, wholly independent of American management. General de Gaulle drove the point home by severely limiting French military participation in NATO and envisaging a European Union including the Communist governments. Great Britain, he thought, should be kept out of the Common Market because she was too subject to American influence.

Americans in the fifties did not regard NATO and the EEC as the rival organizations they have now become. In the study under examination, Dr. Kissinger reminded us that "the United States welcomed the formation of the Common Market as a step towards European political union." But the two institutions were soon in the first stages of the conflict that *The Troubled Partnership* envisaged. Because NATO is a military alliance directed against Russia, it has never been joined by four eligible governments that are pledged to neutrality—Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland. These states have also refused formal connection with the Common Market, because it often seems to be under NATO control.

The overlap with NATO is not the only factor that has hampered development of the Common Market. It was organized as a customs union, with a minimum of political apparatus. For the American states, on the other hand, union was achieved by superimposing political agencies—a national president and a directly elected House of Representatives. Indeed, during the uncertain years following the Declaration of Independence, there was little economic unity among the 13 states. Trade between them was sparse and often hampered by tariff barriers and other restrictions. Not until adoption of the Constitution did Americans begin to regard their Republic as a free trade area.

The eventual political union of Western Europe was clearly anticipated by the Treaty of Rome. But with the long record of national antagonisms, and the wounds of World War II so recent, it was impossible to confront the issue of state sovereignty squarely. Even with us that problem led to civil war. It is still impossible to envisage a single executive authority for the Common Market countries, except perhaps in short-range national rotation. And a directly elected European parliament, with very limited supranational powers, will not be achieved before 1978.

Dr. K, who has never shown himself a strong admirer of parliamentary government, was not disturbed by this nonpolitical approach to unification when he wrote *The Troubled Partnership.* "The decline in the role of the European national parliaments has been apparent for decades," he declared. He seemingly anticipated that centralized planning by a competent international bureaucracy, like the commission of the EEC, would develop all necessary international liaison. And the preservation of national identities in Europe would make it easier for the United States to manage the military alliance system of NATO, dealing directly with weak governments both in and out of the free trade area.

There is no doubt that, up to a point, the Common Market has been successful. For the passage of both products and people, frontier barriers have been greatly lowered between and among EEC members. In the original grouping of six—France, Italy, West Germany, and the three small "Benelux" countries—there have been notable gains in productivity. Social services through the EEC have been effectively coordinated to facilitate the transit of workers.

But the degree of unification was not sufficiently complete to cope with the coming of depression and the unfortunately almost simultaneous admission of Great Britain, Ireland, and Denmark to the Common Market. It was strong enough to support the weak economy of Italy until addition of the impoverished British Isles proved too heavy a burden. Centralization in the EEC has never achieved the fundamental basis of a common currency, nor even a common monetary policy through reserve bank cooperation. So annual inflation has been varying from 20 percent in Great Britain to under 5 percent in West Germany, making free trade within the market ever more difficult. This is a sharp contrast with American experience, which wisely placed political union ahead of economic union.

The most potent impediment to the unification of Western Europe has been the protective shield of the United States. It has been our policy to encourage these small nations to rely on us separately, through NATO, rather than on each other by the development of federation. Dr. K did not initiate this policy and analyzed its weaknesses. But during his long tenure as secretary of state he has maintained it.

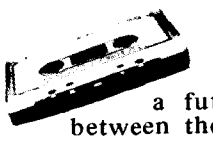
Ironically enough, the Kremlin has throughout pursued a virtually parallel policy towards its satellite governments in Eastern Europe. The Comintern, or Communist International, was Moscow's response to NATO, no more intended to encourage federation in the East than was the Atlantic Alliance to secure that development in Western Europe. It was this division of Europe into hostile groupings of individually powerless states, each group dominated by a non-European giant, to which General De Gaulle, intelligently if not always tactfully, objected.

That division is now breaking down. At the recent congress of Communist parties in East Berlin, the Kremlin formally abandoned its claim to control the policies of communism in other countries. To some extent this may be a purely tactical move, to lull American suspicions. Nevertheless, it strongly suggests that the United States will soon similarly surrender the political supremacy that the Atlantic Alliance has given us in Western Europe. Europe's many varieties of Marxist sympathizers, released from Russian domination, are not likely to tolerate the alternative of continuous American control.

We may anticipate a sharply modified foreign policy so far as Europe is concerned. NATO will be phased out and with it the remnants of the Iron Curtain. The concept of detente will revive. With less subservience both to Moscow and to Washington there will be more sense of unity throughout all Europe. As Dr. Kissinger wisely recommended in this book written while he was still a free agent: "The United States should leave the internal evolution of a united Europe to the Europeans...."■

LIBERTARIANISM & FUTURISM

By Jerome Tuccille



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PHILOSOPHY

Answer to Ayn Rand

By John W. Robbins

Reviewed by Roy A. Childs, Jr. / Order from the author: PO Box 4028, Arlington, VA 22204 / $3.95 pb

This book is an answer to the philosophy of Ayn Rand, Objectivism, by a young Calvinist, who holds a PhD in political philosophy from Johns Hopkins University. Now, before one immediately rejects the book on that account—as I assume the vast majority of *LR*'s readers are wont to do—it should be said that, yes, the book has a great many faults, but it is, by and large, the best critique of Objectivism which has yet seen print in book form. It is not a *true* critique, but it is an engaging one.

Robbins holds that, like all humanist and secular philosophies, Objectivism leads to a dead end. He attempts to show that its metaphysics leads to a quaint nineteenth century form of materialism and (apparently) mechanism, its epistemology to skepticism, its ethics to hedonism, and its politics to, alas, anarchism. Only on this last score do I agree with him, and then not for the reasons he gives. In opposition to Objectivism, Robbins pits a "consistent Christianity," i.e., *Calvinism,* that begins with the axiom that "the Bible is the word of God." Not the *existence* of God, you understand, but the allegedly more fundamental axiom that "the Bible is the word of God." How do we know this? Robbins' answer is to the point: "the Bible says so, over and over again." But the reader should not conclude from this that Robbins is completely wacky. Indeed, his short book takes up the *published* sources of Objectivism point by point, ranging from metaphysics and epistemology to politics.

That is, unfortunately, Robbins' first mistake. For a large measure of the alleged "proofs" of Objectivism's theses exist only on tape. Thus, what is the point of discussing the Objectivist theory of knowledge without reference to Branden's lectures on "The Nature of Reason," "Logic and Mysticism," or even Peikoff's ten lectures on Objectivism's theory of knowledge? What is the point of discussing the Objectivist ethics without tracking down Leonard Peikoff's lecture on "The Objectivist Meta-ethics," or even referring to Nathaniel Branden's five or six lectures on the subject in "The Basic Principles of Objectivism"? This kind of gall, coming from a serious thinker, boggles the mind.

Part of the fault lies with the principals of the philosophy itself, who do not ever seem to have understood that serious philosophy cannot be done in taped lectures, that this procedure precludes serious investigation by scholars and, hence, fundamental debate over key or subtle points and insights. Nonetheless, Robbins does not use the sources he should have. The result is that he misunderstands the philosophy of Objectivism; he interprets it as a slightly different form of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Now, Objectivism is *in* that tradition, but there are subtle differences, differences that Robbins has not altogether caught.

For example, in discussing the Objectivist theory of knowledge, he blurs the distinction between the Objectivist theory of concepts and that of the classical Aristotelian tradition, then proceeds to trot forth all of the classical objections to the Aristotelian tradition. Yet it is an explicit claim of Ayn Rand—correct or not—to have *amended* that tradition and to have set it on a new and proper path. Robbins misses the point, and takes up the Aristotelian theory of abstraction—where one aspect of a thing ('essential') is separated from others ('accidental') and only the former is retained in the concept. This leads to the problem that the wider the concept, the less its content, which in turn leads to the Hegelian view that concepts such as 'everything' are indistinguishable from *nothing.* But for Rand, a 'concept' results from *integration* of facts of reality; abstraction is a process performed only to allow us to organize our knowledge in a certain way, and is always accompanied by a process and organization of factual content. Thus for Rand, the wider a concept, the *greater* its factual content. And thus does she banish the Hegelian dilemma. But Robbins grasps none of this.

Robbins also has problems with the Objectivist concept of 'existence', or of 'objective reality', and he gets tangled up in the Objectivist theory of axioms. 'Existence' and 'objective reality' are interpreted in the light of nineteenth century mechanistic materialism, since Robbins works from within the classic mind-body dichotomy. But by 'objective reality' or 'existence', Objectivists mean *whatever* exists; they don't claim to have made up their minds in advance. There is no mechanistic view of nature here. As for axioms, Robbins tries to prove that one cannot *prove* one's axioms—forgetting that proof *presupposes* the means of proof, i.e., the axioms—and makes the leap to the view that one's acceptance of one set of axioms over another (e.g.,"the Bible is the word of God" over 'existence', 'identity', and 'consciousness') is *arbitrary,* i.e., a matter of *faith.* Reason thus becomes for him a "handmaiden of faith." But for something to be arbitrary, there has to be something opposed to it which is *nonarbitrary:* if *axioms* are arbitrary, then *everything* is, and the notion makes no sense. Moreover, Rand shows that "there *is* a way to ascertain whether a given concept is axiomatic or not: one ascertains it by observing the fact that an axiomatic concept cannot be escaped, that it is implicit in all knowledge, that it has to be accepted and used even in the process of any attempt to deny it" (*Introduction to Objectivist Epistemology*).

There are other interesting stunts pulled by Robbins, but there is no space here to consider them. Especially interesting is Robbins' view that science is arbitrary and does not give us knowledge because measurements are not exact in some farfetched Platonic sense. To what does Robbins oppose the claims of science, with its inexact measurements? The claims of revelation: "by revelation we have been given not only a coherent epistemology, but a coherent theology, ethics and politics . . . ." Moreover, "the 'triumphs of science' are not epistemological triumphs, and can constitute no objection to belief in the truths of the Bible. There is no clash between 'truths discovered by science' and revealed truths because science gives us no truths." Simple enough? This is offered to us—admittedly sketchily—as a way out of the impasse created by "secular philosophy."

(Continued on page 10)

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The Theory of Moral Sentiments, Adam Smith's first book, will startle those who think capitalists are purely selfish, for Smith fully understood that liberty must be based in a moral order. E. G. West writes the introduction to this beautiful new edition.
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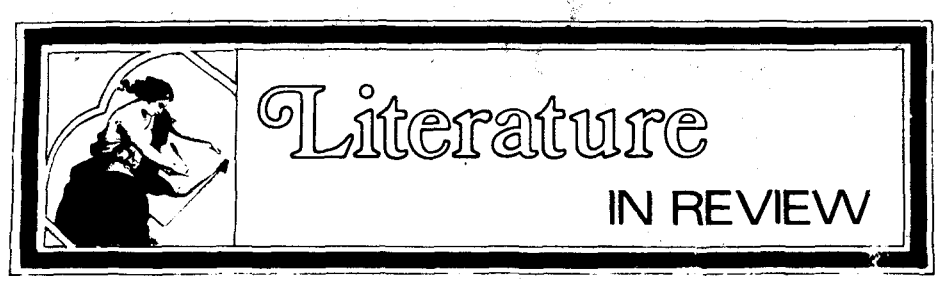

Introduction to Imaginative Literature

By Jeff Riggenbach

PART VI: THE ESSAY

An essay is a work of discursive prose or verse which is valuable, not alone or not at all for whatever information or philosophical truth it may contain, but rather, in whole or in part, for the thinking process, the cognitive style, the psycho-epistemology, it embodies, displays, formulates. As essayist Edward Hoagland puts it:

> A personal essay is like the human voice talking, its order the mind's natural flow, instead of a systematized outline of ideas. Though more wayward or informal than an article or treatise, somewhere it contains a point which is its real center, even if the point couldn't be expressed in fewer words than the essayist has employed. A personal essay frequently is not autobiographical at all, but what it does keep in common with autobiography is that, through its tone and tumbling progression, it conveys the quality of the author's mind. Nothing gets in the way. Because essays are directly concerned with the mind and its idiosyncrasy, the very freedom the mind possesses is bestowed on this branch of literature that does honor to it, and the fascination of the mind is the fascination of the essay.

The fascination of the mind—*not* the fascination of any particular subject the mind might choose to generalize, concretize, simplify, illustrate, expand, contract, define, refute—think about. It makes literally no artistic difference what an essay is "about," as long as it is "about" something. This is why Charles Lamb's essay on "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist" is as meaningful today as when it was written, though we contemporary readers know nothing about Mrs. Battle. It is why some essays, like those of James Branch Cabell, are biographical and/or literary, while others, like those of Henry Miller, are typically autobiographical. Still others, like those of Edgar Saltus and Walter Pater, are historical and philosophical. And a few—Joanna Russ' *The Female Man* seems a good example—combine fictional and even poetic elements with autobiography and philosophy, the whole being unified artistically (and this is why it is best classified as an essay) by a consistent method of thinking about its central subject: in the case of *The Female Man*, its presentation of the way one account of Woman emerges from four different ones in a kind of interior tetralogue—each account being presented as a character and distinguished by the verbal style in which she thinks and speaks.

The Female Man is both one of the most recent and one of the most complexly elaborate major works in the essay category—a category less than four hundred years old (most historians trace it no further than the French philosopher Montaigne, whose *Essays* appeared in 1580) and in our own era enjoying the greatest public acceptance in its history. The second half of the twentieth century is proving to be a period when (in urban North America, anyway) essays like Frederick Exley's *A Fan's Notes,* Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* and Robert Ringer's *Winning Through Intimidation* become best sellers and when the too-often hack-infested form of essay writing called book reviewing is the easiest sort of writing for an unestablished author to sell. It might even reasonably be argued that at least two of this century's finest essayists come from among the ranks of its professional reviewers: Cyril Connolly, whose posthumously published *The Evening Collonade* offers a representative sampling of his atmospheric essays in miniature—evocations of persons, places and periods now remote, all of them cast as ruminations upon books and richly textured with the deep, complex harmony of a mental life in which books are the primary facts; and James Gibbons Huneker, who filled nearly twenty volumes between 1899 and 1921 with magazine and newspaper reviews of the seven traditional arts—the Drama, Dance, Poetry, Painting, Music, Sculpture, and Architecture—bringing to his criticism the sort of metaphorical originality and self-conscious verbal control one might expect of the Symbolist, or Aesthetic, movement of which he was a part.

Edmund Wilson argued nearly fifty years ago in his first book, *Axel's Castle* (itself a not inconsiderable essay in criticism), that the Symbolist movement, including its disciples and close relatives, the "Decadence" of the 1890s and 1920s and the Modernist movement, is an outgrowth of the original Romantic movement—and, as such, is a literary celebration of the Individual. It should not seem surprising, then, if symbolist writers should find a form "directly concerned wth the mind and its idiosyncrasy" a congenial one or if a disproportionate number of the best essays in English should be written by symbolist writers. Beside Huneker, the major figures in this tradition, in roughly chronological order, are Edgar Allan Poe, Walter Pater, George Moore, Edgar Saltus, Oscar Wilde, Carl Van Vechten, and James Branch Cabell. Particularly noteworthy among their works are Pater's *The Renaissance,* Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man,* Saltus' *Imperial Purple* (see my review in *LR,* July 1974), Wilde's "The Decay of Lying" and "The Soul of Man Under Socialism" (in *The Soul of Man Under Socialism and Other Essays,* Harper, 1970), Van Vechten's *Excavations,* and Cabell's *Beyond Life* (see my "Philosophy and Sense of Life Revisited," *Reason,* November 1974).

Not every important essayist in English falls within the Symbolist tradition, of course, and space permits mention of a few who fall, gracefully and artistically as one might wish, without it. Henry David Thoreau might lay some claim to being the first native American individualist anarchist—see his famous essay "Civil Disobedience," which is often conveniently packaged by publishers with another of his major works, *Walden.* Edward Dahlberg's essay "Thoreau and Walden" (in *The Edward Dahlberg Reader,* New Directions, 1967) may serve both as a useful commentary on the earlier writer and as a highly favorable introduction to the sadly neglected and unread later one. Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary* must surely represent a sort of high-water mark for that haiku among essays, the epigram (see L.A. Rollins' review in *LR,* August 1974), though Thomas Szasz (in *The Second Sin* and *Heresies*) and Robertson Davies (in *The Table Talk of Samuel Marchbanks*) have also done highly finished work in its demanding form.

Colin Wilson, Aldous Huxley, and Henry Miller are three contemporary essayists who capture in their work that infinitely suggestive and fertile process which is the artistic mind's natural way of dealing discursively with philosophical ideas. Perhaps because he is so essentially an essayist that his true subject is always his own mind, Wilson is at his best in his autobiographical writing, like *Voyage to a Beginning,* though his essays on the writers who have helped shape him, like "Hermann Hesse" in his recent volume *Hesse, Reich, Borges* (Philadelphia: Leaves of Grass Press, 1974), are always provocative.

A representative selection of Huxley's best short essays is to be found in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*—see especially "The Education of an Amphibian" and "Knowledge and Understanding" for an artistic approach to epistemology. And among his longer essays, *The Doors of Perception* is not to be missed—either as artistic epistemology or as a triumphant confirmation of our language's capacity—in the hands of an artist—to formulate even modes of awareness which played no part in its creation (see my review in *LR,* September 1975).

Henry Miller, that satyric would-be Noble Savage of Letters, is a pioneer in the depiction of the ways in which human passions—ecstatic as well as tragic—affect human thought, portraying them with an uninhibited ferocity virtually unknown in *English* before. Sometimes, as in "The Tailor Shop," this ferocity breaks through straightforward realistic narrative like a volcanic eruption; at other times, as in "Jabberwhorl Cronstadt" and "Megalopalitan Maniac," it imposes on the subject material from the beginning a kind of surrealism of vocabulary and even of grammar, as if trying to force language into as exaggerated, even grotesque, a shape as that of the emotions it is being twisted to formulate. All three of these essays are included in Miller's 1936 collection, *Black Spring,* a book whose style exhibits almost none of Miller's usual unevenness and whose beautiful title, unfortunately, has almost nothing to do with its content.

A title, after all, ought to be the work in a nutshell; it ought to name the essence of what follows it. Still, a work grows as it is written: it branches out in unexpected directions, sheds dead and dying parts which once had seemed major arteries, and soon becomes *essentially* a different thing. And if its title was chosen at its birth, as in the case of the work now ending, it likely now appears inappropriate and misleading. And so it seems, to me at least, in the present case. Accordingly, I want to conclude my "Introduction to Imaginative Literature" by adding the word "informal" to its title. Properly printed, the amended title is: "An Introduction to Imaginative Literature," with a carat between the words "an" and "introduction," and the word "informal" hovering above. It is *an introduction* because it is one of many different possible introductions to a subject as complex and various as the human race itself and because it is designed to launch a new relationship in which the introducer, having acted as a catalyst, need play no further part. It is an *informal* introduction because it aspires to no particular type or *form*—being neither historical survey nor annotated reading list nor bibliographical essay—but freely exhibits the idiosyncracies of its author—his passions for the fantastic, the exotic, the decadent, the abstract, the philosophical, the artificial, the self-conscious, the avant garde, the Teutonic—formulating all this in its recommendations and exclusions, and formulating in its involuted and parenthetical essayist's style his entire method of awareness—his way of prehending the way the world is.■

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Intelligence Can Be Taught

PSYCHOLOGY

By Arthur and Linda Shaw Whimbey

Reviewed by William Danks / Dutton, 1975 / $7.95

There are many aspects to freedom. Libertarians rightly concentrate most particularly on freedom from coercion—especially coercion in its most institutionalized form, the state. However, advancing research uncovers more and more *other* areas where people can and should be free. The result is an ever-widening appreciation of the voluntary field in which human beings operate.

One such area is in biofeedback, where "involuntary" aspects of the human organism prove to be actually under quite easily attained voluntary control.

Another—and crucial—area is intelligence. Granted, libertarian theory discounts both the possibility and even the *desirability* of any so-called intellectual equality. It is empirically evident that no such equality exists, nor even that the term is operationally meaningful. (See Murray Rothbard's title essay in *Egalitarianism as a Revolt Against Nature.*) However, some concern could be raised regarding the seemingly "fated" or "determined" quality of human intelligence. Are people genetically "assigned" a specific intellectual level to which they are doomed for the rest of their lives? Is the important area of a person's intellectual make-up even less susceptible to intentional improvement than that of the physical body?

To these questions the Whimbeys answer a resounding and convincing *no!* Their book proves the exact opposite to be the case. Intelligence is a learned skill. It can be taught and developed.

> "Intelligence is a learned skill. It can be taught and developed."

The opening chapter describes on-going changes in the concept of intelligence. Training projects are cited where children of mothers with IQs under 75 (mentally "retarded") were able to attain *mean* IQ scores of 124, and where high school students achieved an overall average increase of 136 points on their Scholastic Aptitude Tests.

Chapter two deals with the blind side of psychometrics, and surveys the harmful effects of behaviorism. The Whimbeys show the dear price paid by the radical banning of introspection from much of American psychological science. They remind us that Binet and Piaget—the two greatest contributors to knowledge of intelligence—were Europeans, non-behaviorists, and extensive users of introspective techniques.

Chapter three is the heart of the book. It deals with the general approach that Arthur Whimbey calls cognitive therapy. Ten research studies are analyzed. Each is concerned with the understanding and improvement of human mental capacity. Each produces very promising results. Although the specific aims and foci of the various projects differ to some extent, there is an underlying logic of procedure to the set. In summary, they indicate that intelligence is "in large part at least, a habitual approach to problem solving—a learned mental skill. Training this skill is accomplished through demonstration and guided practice."

The fifth chapter is another center of the authors' conceptual thesis. Specifically it considers: (1) the nonsynonymous corelations of intelligence and learning activity, (2) intelligence and abstract thinking ability, (3) vocabulary and intelligence, (4) Binet's definition of intelligence as mental reconstruction, (5) the spectrum of human skills, (6) intelligence and real-life problem solving, and (7) intelligence, neurological correlates, and genetics.

The last leads nicely into the final two chapters on "The Genetics of Intelligence" and "Race and IQ." Both offer a cool and finely reasoned discussion from a fresh perspective on the (unfortunately) still-raging debate surrounding the pronouncements of Arthur Jensen, William Shockley, and other genetic determinists.

The Whimbeys show how such statements are often "textbook example[s] of lying with statistics." Specifically, the lie is due to faulty methodological orientation; a too narrow statistical perspective, and oversimplification of experimental data.

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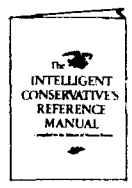

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Mencken— *(Continued from page 1)*

Above all, *A Gang of Pecksniffs* is a charming history of professional journalism, with the salient features put into perspective by a master story-teller. There are essays on some of the giants of the field, Hearst and Pulitzer, for example. And there are comments on almost every aspect of the newspaper business, foreign correspondents, editors, publishers, and reporters. Three of Mencken's speeches are included, and there is a partial transcript of an interview. Mencken's great virtue as a commentator is his ability to abstract the ridiculous from the solemn, and especially from the obscene. Each of subjects he focuses on have their shortcomings traced down and burlesqued in the grand Mencken style. The blasts are outrageous, but they are always sincere.

Mencken seems to have discovered that the ridiculousness of the obscene could be used as a goad for reform. For each of his burlesques there is a motif of moral exhortation, if not to the perpetrators of the obscene, then at least to the "intelligent minority." He must be ranked with the greatest of writers in his ability to impose the logic of folly upon the reader. His essay on Hearst reveals much that was common to himself: "He made a burlesque of the whole 'God-save-us' scheme of things. . . . He proved that what the populace really wanted was simply a roaring show . . . . The proletariat taken to a palpable circus became cynical, and it remains so to this day. It is still exploited, to be sure, but it no longer worships its exploiters."

A more broad, and far more interesting example of Mencken's social commentary is found in *The Letters of H.L. Mencken.* Here the burlesque of American culture and politics covers a period of forty years, from 1908 to 1948. It pictures the American scene from the halcyon days prior to the First World War through the fiasco of two world wars, the Roaring Twenties and Prohibition, and over the Great Depression. The correspondents include: Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ezra Pound, Edgar Lee Masters, Sinclair Lewis, and Upton Sinclair, a virtual Who's Who of early twentieth century American literature.

The usual good humor rings all through this long tome. Indeed, there is so much good humor over so prolonged a period that one must stand back and marvel. HLM witnessed a decline in popularity throughout the thirties and suffered many other disappointments, including the deaths of many loved ones. But his cheerful letters continued to pour forth. If he wasn't writing to encourage a struggling young writer, then he was consoling a veteran in the writer's bouts with depression and loneliness. And there were always such pranks as the Maryland Madstones and the religious salutations. Even as he watched intimate friends succumb to the lunacy of political messianism (Dreiser became a Communist and Pound a Fascist) or fall into alcholism (Fitzgerald and Lewis), Mencken stood firm, withstanding internal degeneracy as well as external persecution with the shield of his humor.

The scope of the *Letters* generally parallels the author's shifting personal interests. The earlier letters tend to be concerned with literature while the later correspondences are more political. As editor of *Smart Set* and later of the *American Mercury*, the author enjoyed a vantage point for observing American culture and politics that alone makes his letters imperative reading for the student of Americana. The fact that Mencken was personally embroiled in many historic events over his long career as the dean of American iconoclasts lends an intrinsic fascination to the narrative. One becomes engaged in his early war with the Comstocks and government censors in behalf of Dreiser and other literary rebels. His attack then moved on to the sham of World War I censorship for which he was often decried as a German agent-provocateur. Unshaken by base appeals to patriotism, Mencken proceeded to lambast the war effort and protested vainly against the censorship it entailed.

No sooner had World War I departed than Prohibition was foisted upon the American public. Again Mencken took to the charges. His personal correspondences are delightful and defiant as his public blasts: "All is lost including honor. But I have enough good whisky, fair wine and prime beer secreted to last me two solid years. . . . I sold my motor car and invested the proceeds in alcohol . . . .

"Another great crusade is already underway. It is against copulation. A government bureau has been established to spread the news that the practice is not necessary to health . . . . In the Middle West there is a growing movement against tobacco. In a few years you will see a republic that is chemically pure. Pray for the day."

With the close of Prohibition, Mencken's favorite target became the New Deal, with its brain trust of technocrats and its appeals to popular emotions. He long foresaw the advent of the Second World War, and once again committed himself an isolationist. But this time around, he declined direct confrontation with the United States War machine: "My belief is that Roosevelt will horn into the war at the first chance. He is, to be sure, still bellowing about keeping the United States out of it, but no rational man takes such talk seriously . . . . It will be impossible for me to write anything or more accurately, to print anything. I'll probably do what I did the last time; that is, devote myself to a job that has nothing to do with the current carnage."

The most interesting aspect of Mencken's correspondence during the thirties is that dialogue he maintained with old friends who had slipped into political messianism. Mencken's own popularity was at low ebb during this period, but he suffered his fortune without abandoning his convictions. With characteristic spirit he wrote Ezra Pound in 1937. "My dear Pound: . . . Why not remove those obscene whiskers, shake off all the other stigmata of the Left Bank, come home to the Republic, and let me show you the greatest show on earth? If after six months of it, you continue to believe in sorcerey, whether poetical, political, or economic, I promise to have you put to death in some painless manner, and to erect a bronze equestrian statue to your memory alongside the one I am setting up in honor of Upton Sinclair."

While a year earlier in an exchange with Sinclair, Mencken teased, "I admit that you have done more or less hollering for free speech but how much of it did you do during the war, when free speech was most in danger? My recollection is that you actually supported Wilson . . . . I am against the violation of civil rights by Hitler and Mussolini as much as you are, and well you know it. But I am also against the wholesale murders, confiscations, and other outrages that have gone on in Russia. I think it is fair to say that you pseudo communists are far from consistent here."

Mencken's suspicion of ideology is summarized nicely in a letter to B.W. Huebsch, "The radicals, as usual, are wrong. I am still against quacks of all sorts, and especially against radicals. Stalin seems to be swindling them in the grand manner, and I am naturally delighted. The pious mind was made to be rooked, whether by the religion of Jahweh or the religion of Marx." HLM equated ideology with religion (another of his bete noirs playfully bastinadoed throughout his correspondences), and so felt it beneath the dignity of an intelligent and civilized man. Personal autonomy and individual dignity were his sacred cows.

His revulsion at the rightest and leftest ideologies of the thirties cannot be mistaken for abject nihilism, however. Because Mencken was not a fool does not mean that he was unprincipled. In describing a biography of himself by Earnest Boyd, he confided, "Boyd's book is certainly not bad. But he overlooked two things. First the fact that my whole body of doctrine rests upon a belief in liberty. Second, that I am far more an artist than a metaphysician."

These two statements summarize a great deal of what one may expect to find in the *Letters of H.L. Mencken.* True, he is no political philosopher in the technical sense, but neither are most so-called intellectuals, past or present. Mencken was as he himself insisted, a "newspaperman." He is primarily an interpreter of human actions and especially of human character. And this, alas, is a highly subjective business, far closer to the hit and miss judgements of a Dr. Johnson than the precise categories of a Kant. He supplements his disinclination for abstractions with historical understanding and practical experience. These he proceeds to expound in a robust and forceful prose style. His science is not philosophy but rhetoric in the classical Greco-Roman sense. And of this, he was truly a master.

His commitment to individualism governed his thinking on both culture and politics. "I believe that each first rate man like each work of art is unique," he wrote. These opinions seem to have been formed by his early reading of Nietzsche, or perhaps, as others insist, they were congenital. His attraction to Shaw, Conrad, Dreiser et al. was founded more on their boldness than on any intrinsic critical merits of their work. Politically, he believed that government in general (and democracy in particular) constitutes a conspiracy of the inept against the superior individuals of the race. It is, as he remarks elsewhere, "the natural enemy of all decent and productive men." He made the art of burlesquing it a favorite subject in his letters, which is one of the many virtues of this collection. ■

Robbins— *(Continued from page 5)*

I have been very critical of the Robbins book because it has already been touted by some Christians as *the* answer to Objectivism. and hence, they falsely conclude, to secular libertarianism. Well, the book holds one's interest, like most books about Ayn Rand, and there is a certain fascination here, in witnessing the confrontation of a Calvinist with Ayn Rand's views. And *Answer to Ayn Rand* is immensely more thoughful than most books about Objectivism, more penetrating and subtle. Still, it misses the mark. It is a shame, for Objectivism *needs* to be criticized. But first it needs to be understood. Razzle-dazzle which confuses key Objectivist doctrines with those of Aristotle just obscures matters, as does the reliance on Calvinism for a frame of reference. ■

The lectures of Nathaniel Branden, PhD, mentioned in Mr. Childs' review are available on cassette tapes from Audio-Forum, 901 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. Of particular interest are "The Concept of God" (Tape 564, 88 min., $10.95), "Logic and Mysticism" (Tape 563, 69 min., $10.50), "What Is Reason?" (Tape 562, 73 min., $10.50), and "The Objectivist Ethics" (Tape 569, 84 min., $10.95). These tapes are included in "Basic Principles of Objectivism," a 20-cassette course available complete from Audio-Forum for $180. An abbreviated cassette course, "Introduction to Objectivism" (Tape 560, 87 min., $10.95), is also available.

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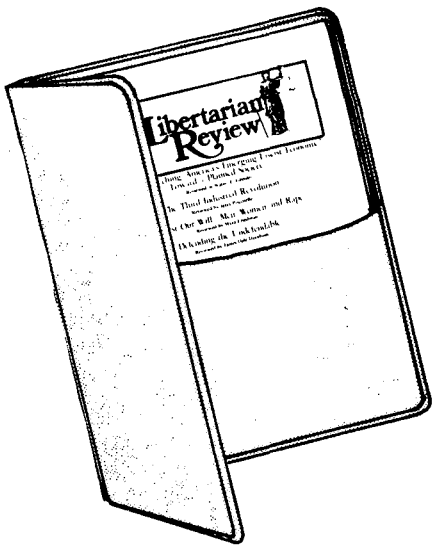

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Adam Smith: 1776-1976

By B. A. Rogge

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To prohibit a great people [the American colonials] . . . from making all that they can of every part of their own produce, or from employing their [capital] and industry in the way that they judge most advantageous to themselves, is a manifest violation of the most sacred rights of mankind.–Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, *1776.*

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.–Thomas Jefferson, Declaration of Independence, *1776.*

In these two passages we find one of the common elements in the two significant bicentennials we celebrate this year. The common element is the conviction that man is endowed by a source greater than himself with certain natural and hence inalienable rights. This common element in the two bicentennials is one of the themes I shall develop in these comments of mine. But first let me hasten to admit that, in the households of the United States in 1976, the two bicentennials (the publication of *The Wealth of Nations* and the proclamation of the Declaration of Independence) are not held in equal awareness or veneration, nor does Adam Smith's name compete for the attention of the young with that of Thomas Jefferson. Yet it is my firm conviction that the members of our own society (and in fact of all societies based on the concept of freedom under law) must look to Smith as well as to Jefferson (and his fellow Founding Fathers) to fully understand our goodly heritage of freedom with order.

Here, as in all matters of judgment, I admit to bias. Adam Smith is generally known as the father of economics, the field of study which is also my own. Moreover, Smith's brand of economics, carrying the trademarks of voluntary exchange, freedom in the marketplace, and limited government, is also my brand of economics–Brand X though it may have become in today's intellectual marketplace. Finally, I believe Adam Smith not only to have been possessed of true wisdom about the nature and possibilities of the human condition but also to have been possessed of a capacity to communicate those ideas with great clarity and great style. In other words, I am an admitted, card-carrying Adam Smith buff.

With no embarrassment, I admit that I hope through these words to encourage some of you who may now know little of Smith and his work to come to want to know more. Even for those who bring to their studies of Smith a presupposition against his strong free market policy position, there is something to be gained. His writing is free of that obscurantism, technical jargon and complicated mathematics that distinguish most modern materials in economics. In Smith's writings, the case for what might be roughly called "capitalism" is put in so clear and straightforward a fashion that it makes a useful stone against which even the convinced socialist can hone his own counter-arguments. Finally, no one who professes to understand even commonly well the course of events of these last two hundred years can afford to be ignorant of the influence on that course of events of the ideas of Adam Smith, whether they have been proven right or wrong. In the words of the historian Henry Thomas Buckle, in his *The History of Civilization,* published in the middle of the last century: "In the year 1776, Adam Smith published his *Wealth of Nations,* which, looking at its ultimate results, is probably the most important book that has ever been written. . . ." Even a true Smith buff may be at least mildly embarrassed by this claim, but that his ideas did have consequences no one can really doubt (but more on this later).

Who was this man, what did he have to say in 1776 and how, if at all, is his thinking relevant to the world of 1976? Adam Smith was born in Kircaldy, Scotland, in 1723 and died in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1790. In between he lived a life free of scandal, wife or children, great incident, and severe disappointment. He was a student (at Glasgow and Oxford), a teacher (at Glasgow and Edinburgh), and a scholar, and his friends were students, teachers, and scholars–but also artists, writers, businessmen, and men of affairs. In a sense, though, he was the true "spectator" of the human scene, involved in that scene, yes, but always capable of detached analysis and appraisal of everything that came within his view.

My intent here is to concentrate on Smith's words and ideas and on their usefulness (if any) in interpreting the modern scene. Those of you who wish to know more of Smith's life or of the intellectual influences that shaped his thinking or of his weaknesses and strengths as a pure technician in the science of economics will need to look elsewhere.

My plan is as follows: First, to present in concise form what I see as Smith's view of the social order.

Next, to identify the ways in which he applied this view to the world of his day, particularly the British treatment of the American colonies. Finally, to identify those ways in which it seems to me that Smith speaks most directly to the problems and possibilities of today's world.

We begin with what I believe to be the essence of the Smith argument–but first a word of preparation. Smith is known as the father of economics, and the book whose bicentennial year we now celebrate has as its complete title, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.* The first sentence of Chapter I, Book I, reads as follows: "The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which it is any where directed, or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour." These substantial straws in the wind would seem to imply that we are about to grapple with a pure piece of economic analysis applied to the essentially vulgar question of how to multiply the quantity of "things" in a nation–and indeed Smith does have a kind word for those vulgar "things" when he writes that, "no society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the greater part of the members are poor and miserable."

But to see Smith as nothing more than an early-day consultant on how to make everyone rich is to do him an injustice. Smith was first and foremost a professor of moral philosophy, and his economic analysis was in a sense a by-product of his concern with such questions as the nature of the universe, the nature of man and the relationship of the individual to society.

When curiosity turns his attention to "the wealth of nations," he begins in effect by reaching into his philosopher's cupboard for the basic materials of his proposed studies. First and foremost he draws out his conviction that there exists a natural order in the universe which, if properly understood and lived in accordance with, tends to produce the "good." Coordinate with and deriving from this natural order is a set of natural rights of individuals (recall the phrasing of the opening passage from Smith–"the most sacred rights of mankind"). For a society to live in harmony with the natural order requires that it respect those "most sacred rights of mankind."

But what does all this have to do with getting more bread on the table? Comes now Smith, the eternal spectator, the observer of all that transpires around him, who is also curious as to what puts more bread on the table. His observations tell him very quickly that the wealth of a nation is primarily determined "by the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which its labour is generally applied." But by what in turn are these determined? By two primary factors: (1) the extent to which the division of labor is carried in the society, and (2) the stock of capital available to the laborers.

But what forces give rise to or permit of the division of labor and the accumulation of capital? Must it be the forces of the ruler, commanding one man to do this and another to do that and ordering all to go without so that the stock of capital may grow? Not at all, replies Smith, the observer-philosopher. *In the natural order of things,* man is so disposed to act as to promote these very ends without the necessity of external commands.

The division of labor finds some part of its initial support in man's natural instinct to truck and barter. More important, the apparent problem of securing each man's cooperation in serving the needs of others proves to be no problem at all. His cooperation is readily secured, not out of his benevolence, but out of his natural regard for his own interest. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own self-interest."

Thus the seeds of the division of labor lie in the very nature of man, that is, in the natural order. In the same way, man's desire for improvement induces him to save and hence to accumulate the capital needed to add even further to the productivity of labor.

But how are the activities of all of these specialists coordinated; what assures that the various parts and processes will be brought together properly in time and place and quantity and quality and all other relevant attributes? Surely here the offices of government must be required. Not at all, Smith replies; a spontaneous order emerges in the very nature of things, an order that arises out of the interaction in the marketplace between the two great forces of supply and demand.

> "My intent here is to concentrate on Smith's words and ideas and on their usefulness (if any) in interpreting the modern scene."

It any one element in this complex chain comes to be in short supply, its price will rise and suppliers will be induced to bring more to the market; in cases of excess supply, the reverse. In this way, in Smith's words, "the quantity of every commodity brought to market naturally suits itself to the effectual demand."

The marketplace, then, as a spontaneously emerging and self-regulating process, is but the natural order at work in the ordering of economic life.

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The pattern is now complete, and he concludes as follows:

> As every individual, therefore, endeavours as much as he can both to employ his capital in the support of industry, and so to direct that industry that its produce may be of the greatest value; every individual necessarily labours to render the annual revenues of the society as great as he can. He generally indeed neither intends to promote the public interest, nor knows by how much he is promoting it. . . . he intends only his own gain, and he is in this as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention.

Continuing with Smith's words,

> All systems either of preference or of restraint, therefore, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, as long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest in his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men. The sovereign is completely discharged from a duty, in the attempting to perform which he must always be exposed to innumerable delusions, and for the proper performance of which no human wisdom or knowledge could ever be sufficient; the duty of superintending the industry of private people, and of directing it towards the employments most suitable to the interest of the society. According to the system of natural liberty, the sovereign has only three duties to attend to; three duties of great importance, indeed, but plain and intelligible to common understandings: first, the duty of protecting the society from the violence and invasion of other independent societies; secondly, the duty of protecting, as far as possible, every member of the society from the injustice or oppression of every other member of it, or the duty of establishing an exact administration of justice; and, thirdly, the duty of erecting and maintaining certain public institutions.

In a very real sense, *The Wealth of Nations* can be viewed as an attack on the prevailing economic philosophy and practice of the author's day—an untidy collection of ideas and actions identified as mercantilism. Mercantilism was associated with the more powerful nation-states of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, with England, France, Spain, Portugal, and Holland. Its primary purpose was to enhance the power and wealth of the nation, whether led by a king or a Cromwell or a parliament. The techniques were those of control—control not only of foreign trade (for the purpose of assuring a favorable balance of trade), control not only of colonies around the world, but control of most aspects of domestic economic life as well.

Smith argued that such controls were in fact directly opposed to the ultimate ends they were designed to serve. Thus, not only were the economic controls Britain placed on her American colonies "a manifest violation of the most sacred rights of mankind," but moreover, "under the present system of management Great Britain derives nothing but loss from the dominion which she assumes over her colonies."

What were his proposals for the British colonies? Radical ones indeed! His first was "that Great Britain should voluntarily give up all authority over her colonies, and leave them to elect their own magistrates, to enact their own laws, and to make peace and war as they might think proper." However he admitted that this was "to propose such a measure as never was and never will be adopted, by any nation in the world." Why not? Not because such an action wouldn't be beneficial to the interests of the society but because it would be "mortifying to the pride" and because it would deprive the *rulers* "of the disposal of many places of trust and profit, of many opportunities of acquiring wealth and distinction, which the possession of the most turbulent, and, to the great body of the people, the most unprofitable province seldom fails to afford."

His next and somewhat less sweeping proposal was that Great Britain give the colonies direct representation in Parliament. "Instead of piddling for the little prizes which are to be found in what may be called the paltry raffle of colony faction; they might then hope, from the presumption which men naturally have in their own ability and good fortune, to draw some of the great prizes which sometimes come from the wheel of the great state lottery of British politics."

He goes on to argue that unless this or some other method is found of "preserving the importance and of gratifying the ambition of the leading men of America, it is not very probable that they will ever voluntarily submit to us." Moreover (in a phrase of shrewd prophecy), " they are very weak who flatter themselves that, in the state to which things have come, our colonies will be easily conquered by force alone."

> From shopkeepers, tradesmen, and attornies, they are become statesmen and legislators, and are employed in contriving a new form of government for an extensive empire, which, they flatter themselves, will become, and which, indeed, seems very likely to become, one of the greatest and most formidable that ever was in the world.

These words could have been written no later than 1775 and speak well, at the very least, of Smith's powers of prophecy. Further, Smith's handling of the colonial question was in full accord with and, in fact, derived directly from his general philosophy of free peoples, free economies, and free societies.

> "...Smith's sympathies were with the workers..."

The question now before us is whether Smith's work is of only antiquarian interest to those of us who inhabit the world of 1976—or does it have some continuing relevance? I intend to argue that Smith does indeed provide us with most useful insights into our own problems and with those insights often so phrased as to make them at least the equal in power of persuasion of any later versions of the same thinking. I offer up now for your examination a series of examples, presented in no particular order.

To those who call for the businessman (or others) to act less on self-interest and more on the desire to serve others, he answers: "I have never known much good done by those who affected to trade for the public good. It is an affectation, indeed, not very common among merchants, and very few words need be employed in dissuading them from it."

To those who are now calling for some kind of national economic plan for the United States, he responds:

> What is the species of domestic industry which his capital can employ, and of which the produce is likely to be of the greatest value, every individual, it is evident, can, in his local situation, judge much better than any statesman or lawgiver can do for him. The statesman, who should attempt to direct private people in what manner they ought to employ their capitals, would not only load himself with a most unnecessary attention, but assume an authority which could safely be trusted, not only to no single person, but to no council or senate whatever, and which would nowhere be so dangerous as in the hands of a man who had folly and presumption enough to fancy himself fit to exercise it.

To those special interests who demand protection from goods produced in other countries: "By means of glasses, hotbeds and hotwalls, very good grapes can be raised in Scotland, and very good wines too can be made of them *at thirty times the expence* from which at least equally good can be brought from foreign countries. Would it be a reasonable law to prohibit the importation of all foreign wines, merely to encourage the making of claret and burgundy in Scotland?"

To the tendency of governors and governments to reduce the purchasing power of the money (that is, to produce inflation):

> For in every country of the world, I believe, the avarice and injustice of princes and sovereign states, abusing the confidence of their subjects, have by degrees diminished the real quantity of metal, which had been originally contained in their coins. The Roman As, in the latter ages of the Republic, was reduced to the twenty-fourth part of its original value. . . . The English pound and penny contain at present about a third only; the Scots pounds and penny about a thirty-sixth; and the French pound and penny about a sixty-sixth part of their original value. . . . Such operations have always proved favorable to the debtor, and ruinous to the creditor, and have sometimes produced a greater and more universal revolution in the fortunes of private persons, than could have been occasioned by a very great public calamity.

> "...no one who professes to understand...the course of events of these last two hundred years can afford to be ignorant of the influence of Adam Smith."

On the behavior of organizations of workers: "Their usual pretences are sometimes the high price of provisions; sometimes the great profit which their masters make by their work. . . . Their combinations. . . are always abundantly heard of. In order to bring the point to a speedy decision, they have always recourse to the loudest clamour, and sometimes to the most shocking violence and outrage."

In fact, though, Smith's sympathies were with the workers (as against the masters), and he was pleased with what he observed to be the improvement in the lot of the common worker in the England of his day.

> The common complaint that luxury extends itself even to the lowest ranks of the people, and that the labouring poor will not now be contented with the same food, clothing and lodging which satisfied them in former times, may convince us that it is not the money price of labour only, but its real recompence which has augmented.

To the argument that the workman (and those who use his services) must be protected by apprenticeships, licensing, wage-setting by law or what have you, he responds:

> The property which every man has in his own labour, as it is the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing his strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour, is a plain violation of this most sacred property. It is a manifest encroachment upon the just liberty both of the workman, and of those who might be disposed to employ him. As it hinders the one from working at what he thinks proper, so it hinders the others from employing whom they think proper. To judge whether he is fit to be employed, may surely be trusted to the discretion of the employers whose interest it so much concerns.

But his criticism of some practices of workmen should not be taken to mean that he was uncritical of

(Continued on page 14)

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Rogge— *(Continued from page 13)*

the businessman or merchant. To many of both the initiated and the uninitiated, Adam Smith is seen as a spokesman for the business interest. Thus, for reasons that can only be guessed at, when the Modern Library edition of *The Wealth of Nations* was published in 1937, it included an introduction by Max Lerner, then editor of *The Nation.*

In his introduction, Lerner writes that Smith "was an unconscious mercenary in the service of a rising capitalist class. . . . He gave a new dignity to greed and a new sanctification of the predatory impulses. . . . He rationalized the economic interests of the class that was coming to power. . . "

Even though Lerner admits that "Smith's doctrine has been twisted in ways he would not have approved," the damage is already done, and Smith is confirmed again in the mind of the reading public as the puppet of the bourgeois business interests—a view of him that continues to this day to color the thinking of those who might otherwise learn from him.

Compare this view of Smith with these words in which he describes the proper attitude of the society to proposals for legislation coming from businessmen (and which serves equally well to answer those today who believe that we can best solve our problems by turning over our economic decision-making to good, experienced, competent leaders of business: "The proposal of any new law or regulation which comes from this order [the businessmen] ought never to be adopted till after having been long and carefully examined, not only with the most scrupulous, but with the most suspicious attention."

Nor is Smith at all unaware of the ancient (and modern) propensity of businessmen (as well as others) to attempt to combine to restrict competition. In a famous passage he writes that "people of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public, or in some contrivance to raise prices."

At the same time, his recommendations for dealing with such cases seem to me to reflect greater wisdom than our policies of today.

He continues from the statement above:

> It is impossible indeed to prevent such meetings, by any law which either could be executed, or would be consistent with liberty and justice. But though the law cannot hinder people of the same trade from sometimes assembling together, it ought to do nothing to facilitate such assemblies; much less to render them necessary."

But wouldn't such a policy leave the public to the none-too-tender mercies of the conspirators? Not at all, replies Smith. Why not? Because in the absence of government backing, such conspiracies do not survive. "In a free trade an effectual combination cannot be established but by the unanimous consent of every single trader, and it cannot last longer than every single trader continues of the same mind. The majority of a corporation [i.e., of a government-granted monopoly power to a group of traders] can enact a by-law with proper penalties, which will limit the competition more effectually and more durably than any voluntary combination whatever."

As a matter of fact, in this whole area of competition and monopoly, it seems to me that smith speaks with more wisdom tham most modern economists and most of the associated legislation. Smith creates no unattainable ideal of "perfect competition" as a bench mark for use in appraisal and policy-making. Rather he argues that "all systems either of preference or of restraint . . . being thus completely taken away"—that is, all government interventionist action removed from the marketplace—"the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord."

In other words, all that governments must do to see that competition (i.e., the open marketplace) prevails is to *not* create monopoly. Competition does not need to be created or protected or restored—it inheres in the natural order of things and in the very nature of man. I believe this to have been true in 1776 and to be equally true in 1976. The technological changes of the last two hundred years have served only to make the competitive process *more* intense and to ensure the even quicker demise of the firm that doesn't maintain a perpetual effort to better serve its customers.

But enough of the examples. If you are not yet persuaded of Smith's continuing relevance, a further parade of cases is not likely to be useful. God knows I may be in error, but I am convinced that Smith is not only relevant today but that his insight and wisdom, if applied to today's world, would yield not only a freer but a more productive and equitable set of economic arrangements than if we applied a mixture of what was thought to be the best of contemporary thought.

This does not mean that I have no quarrels with Smith; his third function of government seems to me to be a Pandora's Box; his handling of the theory of value, of what determines the ratio of exchange among goods and services seems to me to be importantly in error, et cetera.

At the same time, I yield to no one in my admiration of his wisdom and for his magnificent contribution to our understanding of ourselves and of our institutions, in the form particularly of this book whose bicentenary year of publication we celebrate this year. It was from this book that such disparate types as William Pitt and Edmund Burke in England and Alexander Hamilton and John Adams in this country admitted having drawn some part of their own thinking on political economy. It is my reasoned conviction that the well-being of every society in the modern world would be at a significantly higher level if more of those in leadership roles in our societies of today were to be reading *The Wealth of Nations* rather than the modern works from which they draw their tragically mistaken policy advice.

I close now with a final offering of the wisdom of Adam Smith, this on the inherent error in *all* systems of control and coming not from *The Wealth of Nations* but from his first book, *The Theory of Moral Semtiments.*

> The man of system, is apt to be very wise in his own conceit, and is often so enamoured with the supposed beauty of his own ideal plan of government, that he cannot suffer the smallest deviation from any part of it. He goes on to establish it completely and in all its parts, without any regard either to the great interests or to the strong prejudices which may oppose it: he seems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board; he does not consider that the pieces upon the chess-board have no other principle of motion besides that which the hand impresses upon them; but that, in the great chess-board of human society, every single piece has a principle of motion of its own, altogether different from that which the legislature might choose to impress upon it. If those two principles coincide and act in the same direction, the game of human society will go on easily and harmoniously, and is very likely to be happy and successful. If they are opposite or different, the game will go on miserably, and the society must be at all times in the highest degree of disorder. ■

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Among Paul Harris' published works are *The Cayman Islands Handbook and Business Guide* (recognized as an authoritative work), *Use of a Tax Haven to Protect Investments and Reduce Taxes,* and *A Concise Guide to the Cayman Islands Companies Law.* He has also contributed articles to several professional journals.

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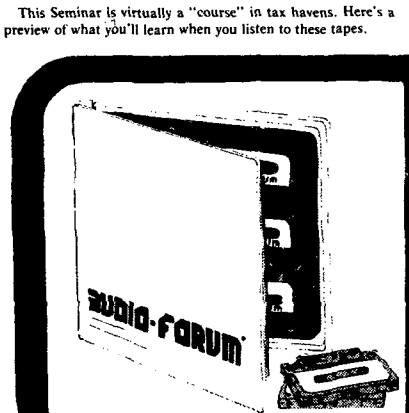

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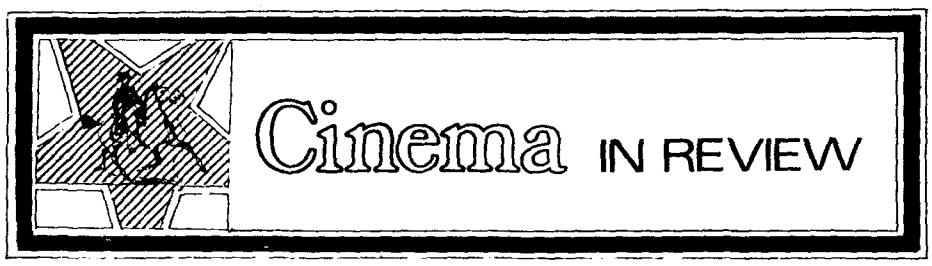

On View

By David Brudnoy

BORING MALONE

Unlike children, who really *are* best seen and not heard, pictures for children are usually too soppy even to *see*. That classic master builder of movies for kids, Walt Disney, managed repeatedly to prop up his stuff either with great gags and at least passable music, or with enough tension and adventure to entice adults into the movie houses along with their wee ones. Disney's films endure, as witness the annual revivals of them in summer Disney festivals around the nation. But most movies constructed for child audiences or fabricated out of the adventures of children are abominable, culminating invariably in tidy endings sufficiently off-putting to inspire in even the most sober adult a passion for ZPG. A rare exception comes along, like this past summer's *The Bad News Bears,* and its barracks language, so true to the way the little monsters talk these days, inspires rage in the dreary *morality in media* types who inhabit a world of their own creation and haven't the slightest conception of what life, much less the life of the younger generations, is all about.

> "Makers of movies about and/or for kids grossly underrate their audiences...."

Makers of movies about and/or for kids grossly underrate their audiences, assuming that instantly forgettable tunes warbled by tin-eared singers, or snippets of dance of the hop-hop-leap-leap variety, and the trite and the true and the tired—that all this should suffice for the youngsters. While there are fashions in movies, as elsewhere, seasons when audiences are thought to crave an unremitting diet of this sort of film or that, of this type of character instead of yesterday's, one type of film knows no season, it's just there: every year some film reaches for the brass ring with still another version of that childhood fantasy routine. It isn't working very well these days, not for most kids, not for most adults. One needn't literally find children boring, though W. C. Fields (really Leo Rosten, but Fields gets the credit) was on the right track, but persons of all ages usually do find sugar-coated children's *films* boring.

So one had high hopes for *Bugsy Malone,* which is unique, no doubt about that, and which promised a new and off-kilter view of the world, not only through kids' eyes but through an entire kid cast. A gangster movie. A musical. A period piece nostalgia number. And kids, all kids, everything of, by, and for kids. A movie, we who follow the trade papers on such things had been instructed and looked longingly ahead to, that would break a barrier and finally, for once, use kids in an original way, and through the use of them tell a straight story in a fun and stylish way.

And some of the promise has been kept. The 1920s gangster flick has been neatly replicated, down to the last item of decor. One of the paths of our adult sinning into a state of radical childhood innocence? Hardly, and thank the gods for that. Angels in training? Nothing of the sort! Americans disdain ambiguity; as a people we are irritated with shadings of gray when white hats and black hats are ever so much more convenient to trigger our responses. We love fair play—at least American myth says we love fair play—and *Bugsy Malone* hasn't destroyed *that* fantasy, nor has it any need to. This is a film that replicates the gangland intramural fights so familiar to generations of American moviegoers, and the story, if seen on its surface level alone, is a harsh one, no simmering in treacle for this flick.

Moreover, there is something of a score, written by that unstoppable gnomelike dynamo called Paul Williams, who, if he drools overlong over the syllables of the title song—*Bohg-zee Mull-hone* is brother Simon's perfect rendering of it—and provides the sounds for too many of the lip-synchs, nonetheless has a way with a catchy beat, and offers in a third of the musical numbers something worth entering on the plus side of the ledger.

There is also a nice comic touch to some of the film. Man, after all, is the laughing animal. We must make light of, defuse the explosive terrors of, our situations by recourse to humor. To understand the arts without understanding comedy is impossible: the comic imagination is eternal, the range of comedy in films is breathtaking, and in *Bugsy Malone* we are permitted to get at least a quick feel of the amorphous thing we require so desperately but so infrequently are able to pin down: comedy. And this film, if not a sledgehammer send-up, not a brilliant parody of the genre it undertakes to look at afresh, shares at least a bit of the wonderful sense of the satiric imagination.

And yet, and yet, *Bugsy Malone* is grotesque, a nice try, a nasty realization. Mr. Alan Parker's *idee fixe* fizzles. We are set down in New York, circa 1929, confronting all-out gang war between Dandy Dan (Martin Lev) and his elegant gang, possessed of a new weapon called the splurge gun, and Fat Sam (John Cassisi), owner of a speakeasy and boss of a lesser and cruder crowd. Chippies and hit-men (hit-kids?), hoofers and hookers, con artists and the much-loved roustabout himself, Bugsy (Scott Baio): all

(Continued on page 16)

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Music IN REVIEW

Yardbirds and Scavengers

By Steven Utley

I never loved the Yardbirds quite as intensely as I loved the Beatles or the Byrds. I nevertheless respected them as one of the important bands of the mid-1960s.

Though cast in the Rolling Stones mold, with strong roots in the music of Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson, and other American bluesmen, the Yardbirds were eclectic in their approach, ranging far afield for inspiration, to jazz, to raga, even, in the case of a song entitled "Still I'm Sad," to Gregorian chants. Between 1965 and '68, despite some confusing changes of personnel, they produced a solid string of trend-setting singles and, as a direct consequence of the personnel changes, introduced not one, not two, but three of the most dazzlingly proficient guitarists in the checkered history of rock and roll.

The Yardbirds' influence can still be detected in today's heavy-metal music: the innovations of the '60s have become the cliches of the '70s.

The original Yardbirds were Keith Relf (vocals and harmonica), Anthony "Top" Topham (lead guitar), Chris Dreja (rhythm guitar), Paul Samwell-Smith (bass), and Jim McCarty (drums). Relf was a decent enough blues harpist. His singing voice, however, was hard, sharp-edged, inflexible. The four musicians behind him were no more or less talented than any in similar bands that were springing up all over the British Isles in the early '60s.

> "The Yardbirds' influence can still be detected in today's heavy-metal music...."

Topham soon left the group. His replacement was Eric Clapton. The band recorded two concert albums, *Sonny Boy Williamson and the Yardbirds* and *Five Live Yardbirds*. Clapton began to show signs of genuine talent and acquired the ironic nickname "Slowhand." Mainly on the strength of their budding guitar virtuoso, the Yardbirds became major-league stuff.

But Clapton also began to show signs of restlessness and quit the band in 1964. Jeff Beck replaced him as spearhead. Things started to happen in earnest in the summer of '65. Epic Records released a Yardbirds single in the United States—"For Your Love," featuring Clapton—and it was a hit. An American album followed. It contained eleven tracks, with Clapton playing on three of them; the liner notes on the record jacket blithely gave Beck credit for all eleven. The group carried through impressively with "I'm a Man," "Heart Full of Soul," and "Shapes of Things." Samwell-Smith left to become a producer of other people's records, and Jimmy Page was hired as bassist. Michelangelo Antonioni displayed the band prominently in *Blow-Up*.

In '67, Beck quit, Page switched to lead guitar, Dreja took over on bass.

In '68, Epic released a final single, "Little Games," followed in short order by an album of the same title, and then the band disbanded.

Relf and McCarty founded Renaissance, of which nothing much can be said. This past May, the 33-year-old Relf was found dead in his London apartment. He had apparently electrocuted himself while playing guitar.

Eric Clapton, a true rock and roll maverick, went from the Yardbirds to John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, Cream, Blind Faith, Delaney and Bonnie and Their Friends, Derek and the Dominoes. Along the way, he became a superstar, much admired, imitated, and exploited: *Sonny Boy Williamson and the Yardbirds*, for instance, was eventually reissued as *Eric Clapton with Sonny Boy Williamson and the Yardbirds*.

More recently, *Five Live Yardbirds*, approximately half of which had appeared on side two of the group's second American album, was re-released as *Eric Clapton and the Yardbirds*, on the Springboard label (SPB-4036). As concert albums go, it's about par for the course, which is to say, a little muddy-sounding, a bit ragged in spots, but fairly listenable. Clapton was not yet a particularly interesting guitarist when the record was made.

When Jeff Beck left the Yardbirds, he rounded up Rod Stewart, Nicky Hopkins, and a couple of others to form the first of his several groups. And he became an admired, imitated, exploited superstar in his own right. There is another Springboard package called *Shapes of Things* (SPB-4039), by "Jeff Beck and the Yardbirds." This is a grab bag of material, most of it prime. Unfortunately, the quality of the sound reproduction is barely adequate at times. The sad part is that *Shapes of Things* seems to be the only Yardbirds sampler currently in circulation; the various Epic albums from which the nine tracks therein were taken have become extremely difficult to locate.

The *real* new Jeff Beck album is *Wired* (Epic PE 33849). Of the Yardbirds' triumvirate of exceptional guitarists, Beck was the one most influenced by jazz. More adventurous than Clapton, more precise and controlled than Page, he may, after all this time, be the best of the three. He has had his artistic ups and downs during the past five or six years, but he's on top here. I'm especially fond of his rendition of "Goodbye Pork Pie Hat," a Charlie Mingus composition, though the other seven instrumentals on *Wired* simply sizzle with energy.

Jimmy Page launched Led Zeppelin in 1969 and, of course, became a superstar, admired, etc. Springboard has dutifully issued something entitled *Special Early Works* (SPB-4038), "featuring Sonny Boy Williamson." What this is, actually, is an old Williamson album on which Page (obviously a pre-Yardbirds Page) did some thoroughly unexceptional guitar playing.

Springboard records, please note, are for completists only. They are strictly bargain-basement goods, cheaply made, cheaply packaged, cheap all around. The names in the Springboard catalog are certainly impressive enough—Jimi Hendrix, Little Richard, the Animals, and so forth—but the records I've examined are either inferior reissues of old albums or else mixed bags of miscellaneous singles, B-sides, hitherto unreleased (and often deservedly so) demonstration tapes. An album called *The Early Cream of Eric Clapton, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker* (SPB-4037) turns out to be not a collection of previously unknown Cream cuts but a hodgepodge comprising three songs from *Eric Clapton and the Yardbirds* and some utterly wretched recordings from Bruce's and Baker's early days. *Jimi Hendrix in Concert* (SPB-4031) turns out to contain only one "live" cut, a pretty raucous one at that, and a handful of studio-taped instrumentals of minimal interest.

There is even a Springboard album called *Rock Guitar Greats* (SPB-4042), featuring Clapton, Beck, Hendrix, Page (oh, and Sonny Boy Williamson)—mostly gleaned from SPBs 4031, 4036, 4038, and 4039. One has but to consider those serial numbers for a moment to get some idea of the ruthlessness with which Springboard recycles its properties. ■

Brudnoy— *(Continued from page 15)*

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play their parts straight, drinking their sasparilla and peddling along in their cars (with the peddles showing) and butchering each other with what looks to be whipped cream. Well it *is* a movie for or at least about kids, sorta, and so, though they "die" when shot, they don't die red, they die vanilla.

The plot is standard drivel and senseless in too many elements. Motivations have simply been dispensed with, and since the film can't quite decide whether it's an absolutely honest tale just incidentally told entirely by children, or a wildly improbably goof on the genre, the awkwardness distresses. The audience, after all, is entitled to some integrity in presentation, and here, save for the costuming and sets and props, there is none. Even granting a certain expectable confusion in such a brightly hopeful experiment, the ending is inexcusable: the final shoot-out, then inexplicably the antagonists burst into big adolescent smiles and once more we know the sugarplum fairy is out of its can again, and the kids have been shortchanged once more, as have their elders, who deserved more—at least a fight to the finish. We're back to ground zero, to, oh, Shirley Temple time, when the assumption energizing movie makers was that the mere presence of cute kids would induce compliance from the audience.

Oh, yes, cute kids. These aren't even cute. Jodie Foster, that prematurely aged child, does the role of Tallulah nicely, Tallulah who hangs around the aptly named Fat Sam. And Florrie Dugger shows some spunk as Blousey, the other female lead. But they and most of the other girls look at least six or seven years older than most of the boys, who are awkward, atrociously baby-faced when snuggling up to the more mature-looking girls, and with few exceptions are just plain homely, which doesn't make bearing the movie's cutesy-poo excesses any easier. Were they *all* prepubescents, and looked it, the case of *Bugsy Malone* might, at least inspire some awry curiosity, just to see them do it, like the dog walking on two legs or the lady preacher.

Oh well, it wasn't meant to be, not yet, not from Alan Parker, not even with the wit and verve Paul Williams and his musical muse brings to any undertaking. Maybe it's a film that grows on you, one that on the late-late show in two years or so will come into its own, presented in snippets midst deodorant and panty-hose commercials. I don't know about that; I know that on the big screen, in garish color, in the splotch of commerical overkill that this film is to receive this winter, it lands with a thud and comes apart at the joints. Any movie nut (by which I mean those who, like your servant, will joyfully go off to see *any* movie, anytime, just on the offchance that it might be fun) will want a venture of this sort to succeed, sometime, somehow. The idea's a hoot; the film's hideous, and that's a damn shame. Humbert Humbert might enjoy it, but few others will. ■

CLASSIFIED— *(Continued from page 22)*

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Washington Watch

By E. Scott Royce

Legislation that Never Made It—The 94th Congress has now adjourned, and the public can begin to make a final assessment of its two-year record. Many bills good and bad of interest to libertarians were *not* enacted into law by this Congress. Prominent among those in the latter category were AT&T's anticompetitive Consumer Communications Reform Act; the Humphrey-Hawkins "full employment" bill, which even some liberal economists had attacked as wildly inflationary; national health insurance; the "consumer protection" agency bill (S. 200), which passed both houses of Congress in 1975 but never reached conference due to President Ford's veto threat; the UN Genocide Treaty; the so-called criminal code reform bill, S. 1; and, thanks to the efforts of Senator Tunney (D-Calif.) and civil liberties groups like the ACLU, S. 3197, the administration's phoney reform package on wiretapping.

Among the "good" legislative measures that Congress failed to act upon were marijuana decriminalization; a national "sunset" law; the Stokes (D-Ohio) bill to ban psychosurgery in federally connected health care facilities; Senator Helms' (R-NC) bill to clear the way for gold-clause contracts; and the libertarian/conservative alternative to Humphrey-Hawkins, the Jobs Creation Act sponsored by Representative Kemp (R-NY) and over 100 of his colleagues. That bill would have revised the corporate tax code to ease the capital shortage, stimulating investment and thus increasing employment, income and, ultimately, tax revenue.

Tax Reform—Late in the session, Congress passed a highly complex tax reform bill. Several of these columns could be devoted to that act alone, but one portion, the gift and estate tax amendments, deserves particular comment. The new law takes several positive steps—replacing the present $60,000 exemption with a tax credit scheduled to rise from $30,000 next year to $47,000 by 1981 (the effect is equivalent to a doubling of the exemption next year, rising to an eventual $175,000 exemption), liberalized husband-wife gift tax provisions, assessment of family-farm property in most cases on the basis of agricultural use, et cetera. Unfortunately, the positive steps are all but negated by changes in the capital-gains tax provisions. Existing law specifies gain relative to the assessed value of inherited assets at the time of the owner's death. The tax bill, however, defines capital gains on such assets as the difference between their value when sold by the recipient and their initial purchase price. Representative Conable (R-NY) attacked the provision, pointing out that it would hurt not only the very wealthy, but also those who "happen to own an appreciated home."

Homosexuality—Passage of a law extending until January 1979 "the period during which the Council of the District of Columbia is prohibited from revising the criminal laws of the District" has upset the Washington gay community. District of Columbia Mattachine Society President Frank Kameny had hoped to get the District's sodomy laws modified next year.

Legislative Booby Prize—Top honors for ridiculous legislation this month go to New York Representatives Richmond (D) and Fish (R), who on 21 September introduced the Urban Tree Act of 1976. The two were concerned, Representative Richmond said, because "tree maintenance and planting programs in urban areas are now suffering as municipal budget cutters across the Nation designate tax levy moneys for police, sanitation, fire, and health care." The bill would set up a program of matching grants, with the Feds meeting dollar for dollar "private contributions for tree care and planting" and providing "50 percent matching funds for municipalities. Each city would submit a coordinated arboculture plan...," et cetera, et cetera. Strictly for the birds.

Syn-Fuels Bill—Legislation to provide a whopping $3.5 billion in federal loan guarantees and $500 million in price supports to enable certain energy giants to develop synthetic fuels on a commercial scale met its second defeat during this Congress on 23 September. A coalition of liberals and conservatives blocked consideration by a one-vote margin when they rejected the rule under which the bill was to be considered. Representative Broyhill (R-NC) noted that the "loan guarantees provided...are only a very small down payment for the ultimate development of the synthetic fuel industry." If the field is worth getting into, other critics asked, why shouldn't the companies involved—not the taxpayers—take the risk?

Emergency Powers—The Congress passed, and President Ford has signed, legislation terminating four national emergencies proclaimed by presidents ranging from FDR (the 1933 "banking holiday") to Nixon (the 1970 postal-strike proclamation). All such future declarations would be subject to semi-annual congressional review and could be terminated by Congress by passage of a nonvetoable concurrent resolution. Now, if we can only get the government to admit it has no right to assume such powers in the first place....

Bricker Amendment—Representative Ashbrook (R-Ohio) has introduced H.J. Res. 105, modeled along the lines of the so-called Bricker Amendment of the 1950s. The measure is needed because of an ambiguity in Article Six of the Constitution. Under one interpretation, the clause in question permits treaties to become "the supreme law of the land" whether or not they conform to the provisions of the Constitution. Worse, in a 1942 decision (*U.S.* v. *Pink*, 315 U.S. 203) the Supreme Court gave equivalent status to executive agreements. H. J. Res. 105, Ashbrook notes, would "clearly establish that treaties and executive agreements shall not take precedence over the Constitution of the United States."

Korea—Retiring House Speaker Albert (D-Okla.) did one last favor for his South Korean government chums in mid-September when he removed from the suspension calendar—a list of measures to be expedited in the House—a resolution introduced by Representative Fraser (D-Minn.) that had been unanimously approved by the House International Relations Committee. The Fraser resolution criticized the South Korean dictatorship, which the US is propping up, for jailing a number of the leaders of its political opposition, including an ex-president. The measure also condemned the North Korean action in the Demilitarized Zone that resulted in the death of two American servicemen. Queried about his action, Albert allegedly replied that the resolution was "controversial." It was indeed—with his friends at the South Korean Embassy.

Briefs—The key votes in the House Ethics Committee that killed prosecution of Daniel Shorr for refusing to reveal the source from which he obtained the confidential House CIA report were cast by Republicans Quie (Minn.) and Cochran (Miss.). On 21 September the House voted 340-61 in favor of H. Con. Res. 737, which affirmed that there is a "right of every person in this country and throughout the world to food and a nutritionally adequate diet...." Another can of worms...■

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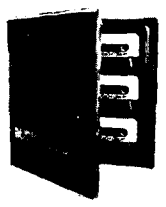

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CASSETTE TAPE

Ladies and Gentlemen, There's a World Out There

By Nathaniel Branden

Reviewed by David Kantorowitz / Tape 588 (49 min.) $9.95. Order from Audio-Forum, 901 N. Washington St., Alexandria. VA 22314.

Being slovenly in character, with an unbecoming appreciation of man's art forms, it struck me, while listening to Branden, how rarely do we appreciate man's prerequisite skill as true art, that is, his capacity to think and communicate clearly. The outpouring of the mind that resides in the body–Branden is truly a piece of art even I can appreciate.

Veteran "Brandenians" treat the appearance of a new book, pamphlet, or tape as an event. Explaining to the uninitiated why this is so is difficult. As with most things, the causes are numerous, subtle, and shifting with audience characteristics. In broadest outlines: Branden combines physical presence and charisma–clearly manifest even on audio tapes–with a breathtaking ability to state his ideas simply, clearly, concisely, and entertainingly. It is a gentle, soft, seductive current that sweeps the listener along, making it so much the harder to step back and analyze what one has heard.

Having attempted to so disengage, my major reservation concerning this lecture lies in the general applicability of its major premise. This affects the type of audience that may profit from it. To this point I shall return.

The cassette consists of a recent lecture given by Branden to the Western Psychological Association of Humanistic Psychology. Coined by Maslow as the "third force" in contemporary psychology, humanistic psychology seeks to extend the limits of man's awareness and psychological growth. It is often criticized by the other two forces (psychoanalysis and behaviorism) as superficial and unempirical.

Consisting of a series of loosely flowing comments, anecdotes and clinical vignettes, the theme of this lecture is an attack upon the prevailing epistomology of the human potential movement (an offshoot of humanistic psychology). The movement tends to treat objective reality as a transitory hindrance which much be surpassed: To grow and prosper man must be in touch with, and live by, his subjective feeling states. To do this, he must appreciate that objective reality is only that which a consensus defines it to be.

Such an epistomology suggests that at an early dawn in man's prehistory, tribe elders held a minion in the morning sun and voted to perceive a tree as a tree and a saber-toothed tiger as a tiger. (I need not spell out what became of those anticonsensual rebels who decided to perceive a tiger as a tree!)

Branden's message is that healthy functioning and full actualization requires dual focus upon our preceptual/integrative thinking processes and upon our inner feeling-states. Disregard for the former leaves us machinelike; disregard for the latter turns us into narcisistic infants. The great feat of human intelligence, and truly viable epistomology for the movement, lies in the integration of these two functions.

A Branden anecdote brings these points home. Some years ago, a young man approached Branden with a problem. Having recently embraced and communicated to a friend the philosophical need to appreciate reason, objective reality, et cetera, the young man was dumbstruck by his friend's retort. The friend's rejoinder goes something like, "You're parking on a starry night on a mountain top with a beautiful, sensuous, ravishing woman. What are you going to do, engage in a 'reason'-filled discussion of objective astronomy?" Of course, commented Branden, the answer is simple. Your friend's premise is wrong. It assumes that in such a context a "reason"-oriented activity would be reasonable. For all things there is a season.

The major reservation I have with this lecture lies in its inaccurate, implicit portrayal of *contemporary* psychology as hopelessly limited to an external focus. Behaviorism, that historical bastion of externalism, has in recent years significantly extended its scope to include self-control, mediating speech, thoughts and images, covert conditioning, et cetera. While the need for a dual inner-outer focus may be a valuable lesson to be taught to adherents of the human potential movement, it is a straw-man issue where the wider psychologically oriented community is concerned.

Nonetheless, I enthusiastically recommend *Ladies and Gentlemen, There's a World Out There* for lay people and for those who live and act via their gut. For the latter group especially, this is exciting and necessary listening. ■

Defending the Undefendable?–

(Continued from page 3)

of the word.

In my view, a person is heroic if he engages in an intrinsically heroic act (plucking a child out of the path of an oncoming truck) *or* if he acts in a mundane way, provided that (1) he has a *right*, according to the libertarian code, to act in this everyday manner; (2) he acts in the face of great and illegitimate coercive opposition and against overwhelming odds; and (3) the continuance of such acts is vitally important to the survival of numbers of people and/or for the protection of their rights.

For example, there is nothing *intrinsically* heroic about the grocer who earns a profit. There are no popular songs extolling his virtues, nor is the grocer the subject of any great epic poems. Nevertheless, when the totalitarian state prohibits "speculation" in food, in cases of shortages or famines, it is easy to show that the ordinary profit-earning grocer can be a hero.

Let us consider the three criteria for heroism. First, grocering is a capitalist act between consenting adults. As such, it is *permitted* by the libertarian code. Although mundane, perhaps, a person has every *right* to sell food at any mutually agreeable price, *no matter what* the law says. (If we have learned anything from the Nuremburg trials, it is that the enactment of a law does not guarantee its morality.) Secondly, the grocer-speculator acts in the face of overwhelming hatred and coercion. Tyrants have even gone as far as imposing the death penalty for speculation in time of famine. Thirdly, disregarding the subjective motives of the speculator-grocer, which are impossible to gauge, the *economic effects* of his actions are to save large numbers of people from starvation. As I try to show in the book, it is the state, *not* the *speculator,* which is responsible for the famine and starvation in the first place.

I admit that no one but a libertarian could combine an economic analysis showing the beneficial effects of speculation with a *moral* analysis defending the full rights of voluntary free trade.

Mr. Davidson then goes on to characterize my defense of the "Person Who Yells 'Fire!' in a Crowded Theater" as "mere sophistry," calling this person a "low-life bum." But again he avoids the content of the chapter he is criticizing.

The main thrust of this particular chapter is that, injustice, there are no valid exceptions to the rights of free speech. I hold that all supposed exceptions can be fully explained without diminishing these precious rights. For example, anyone yelling "Fire!" in a theater should be jailed, I contend, but *not* because he has gone above and beyond his limited rights of free speech. It is because he has violated the private property and contractual rights of the theater owner! As proof of my assertion that there is nothing *intrinsically* wrong with yelling "Fire!" in the proverbial crowded theater, I posit the existence of a group of sadomasochists whose greatest joy is to attend a theater where disruptions are the clearly known order of the day. Do such people not have the *right* to this particular bit of voluntary behavior concerning only those consenting adults? Instead of squarely facing this issue, Mr. Davidson sneeringly observes: "These sadomasochists, panting for a seat on the aisle, seem to me to represent more a species of social pathology than of heroism."

What an attitude for a libertarian to take! Is Mr. Davidson completely unfamiliar with the pioneering work of Dr. Thomas Szasz, who has shown the grave dangers involved in denying the rights of endangered minorities on the grounds of mental illness? Has not Mr. Davidson heard of the Harry Reems case, where the government is threatening to incarcerate a person for pornography–a supposed exception to the First Amendment free speech rights? Does not Mr. Davidson think it important for libertarians to take a *principled* stand on the rights of free speech, instead of quibbling about the justice of this or that exception? How then can he justify his casual and surly dismissal of the chapter?

The reviewer next launches an attack on my defense of slander and libel. Some libertarians might want such doings prohibited on the grounds that they violate the property rights of people in their own reputations. But I attempt to show that reputations are *not* the property of those to whom they apply; rather, they consist of the thoughts of *other* people. We cannot, therefore, legitimately prohibit slander or libel, certainly not on the grounds that they are equivalent to theft. Paradoxically, I conclude, reputations would be *safer* in a libertarian society that legalized slander and libel. Currently there is a natural tendency to give some credence to any publicized character assassination. But in the free society, slurs would come so thick and fast that newpapers might need special sections to report them. No longer would slander or libel have an almost automatic power to ruin reputations by merely being touted. No, they would have to be *substantiated,* and their magical, harmful properties would disappear.

What has Mr. Davidson to say of all this? Although calling the chapter "eye opening" and "argue[d] convincingly," he takes me to task for not including some irrelevant musing of Gordon Tullock's, calls for a "richer and fuller development" by someone else "who does have a firm grounding" in the subject matter, and dismisses the argument as "too scanty to convince . . . persons. . . inclined to give the matter careful thought." Yet he fails to specify *why* the reasoning is too scanty, or where it fails.

The rest of the review is even more superficial. Mr. Davidson touches upon some dozen other chapters, spending no more than a few words on each. For example, we learn that the chapter on drug addiction "is something else again, strain[ing] Block's reasoning to the limit." (In this chapter, I deal with the question of the individual's right to engage in pastimes dangerous only to himself, the argument that such activities will reduce the GNP, and the problems posed by so-called noncontractual or implicit responsibilities.) And we learn that "the chapter on the inheritor seemed [to Mr. Davidson] to be entirely beside the point. A good editor might well have excluded it from the collection, as it tells us nothing we don't already know, namely that most individuals will warm to a gift." That is *all* he says about a chapter in which I criticize the 100 percent tax on inheritance, employ one of Kurt Vonnegut's stories as a reductio ad absurdum against *all* inheritance taxes and coercive egalitarian schemes, and criticize the renowned economic argument of "second best."

The review was shallow, repetitive, and gave a higly inaccurate picture of *Defending the Undefendable.* I had hoped that a critical review in these august pages would tackle at least some of the substantive issues raised in the book.

I would like to thank Walter Grinder for characterizing *Defending the Undefendable* as "the hottest book in libertarian circles since Nozick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia,*" as "ideologically sound," and a "seminal libertarian work." [See "Libertarian Cross-Currents," *LR,* Sep.-Oct. '76–Ed.] In no small way, Walter himself is responsible for much of the inspiration behind the book, as I state in my dedication page.

I am puzzled about his critique, however. First, he loves many of those I defend as "the dregs of society . . . the very scum of the earth." But this is his own *personal* opinion, in no way supported by the libertarian credo of nonaggression.

He then calls the book a "short-run strategic disaster" because "the layman reader won't be able to distinguish between a defense of libertarianism and a defense of the 'dregs' [paraphrase]." Try as I might, I just don't see the special difficulty. Surely we've all had to distinguish between the case for *legalizing* drugs, pornography, gambling, etc., and *recommending* their use. We've not always suceeded. But *all* libertarians have this problem. Why single out this book? Even supposing there to be some special problem here, *Defending the Undefendable* focuses on precisely the point that needs to be made: people may use their liberty in socially unapproved ways, and they run the risk of being called "dregs" and "scum" by the Grinders of the world, but they still have the *right* to do so.

Despairing of the "cast-iron stomach" needed to swallow the truths found in *DU,* Grinder's strategic sense is offended by the book's implicit "dare principle" (daring the layman to accept extreme but logical implications of libertarianism). He warns against introducing nonlibertarians to our philosophy in this "absolutely mad way."

This critique ignores decades of experience of the Communists, who have enjoyed great success in planting an unpopular ideology on hostile ground. True, the Communists create front groups designed to show how their views apply to local problems. In this way they bring people into their fold slowly and gradually. *But they also* find converts who take to the systen in one fell swoop. Realizing that individuals can proceed toward

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communism at different paces, and in different ways they have had great success with what Grinder has called the "dare" method. By implying that there is only one path toward libertarianism, I fear that Grinder is less of an individualist, in this one respect, than even the Communists!

The book may not "play well in Peoria" as Grinder contends, but then no one method of presenting our views has met with unqualified success. (I find it somewhat disconcerting, however, that the most vicious reviews of *DU* have come not from the "Peorians," but from those calling themselves libertarians.) But the book has at least attracted a lot of *attention* from laymen. I have interested more of my students in our philosophy in the one semester since the publication of *DU* than I have in my entire previous seven years of university teaching. And the effect on the general public has been enormous, as measured by the sales of the book, and the radio, TV, and lecture appearances it has generated. As far as strategy is concerned, I think Murray Rothbard says it best in his forward to *DU:* "By taking the most extreme examples [of libertarianism] and showing how the Smithian principles work even in these cases, the book does far more to demonstrate the workability and morality of the free market than a dozen sober tomes on more respectable industries and activities." Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice: moral, spiritual, *or* strategic.

But why carp about the strategic implications of a book at all? Isn't it more usual to consider the *contents*, and whether they are *true* or not? Why is *DU* alone judged in this "absolutely mad way"? Does not the layman need a "cast-iron stomach" to digest some of the works of a Rothbard, a Mises, a Barnes, even a *Grinder?* (What's this, Walter, a *ruling class?* Why, you're a Communist!)

Grinder laments that *DU* is not a scholarly book, as it fails to document legal precedents. I totally reject this claim. In my view, true scholarship can be attained in other ways: through creativity, inventiveness, by looking at old problems in new ways. In any case, the literature and the legal precedents are virtually worthless for understanding the cases I deal with. Just imagine the opinions of our legal profession on blackmail, libel, litter, to say nothing of yelling "Fire!" in a crowded theater!

Lastly, Grinder conveniently forgets that *DU* has had the salutary effect of weeding out several people who used to call themselves libertarians. They do so no longer because they feel that pornography, prostitution, drug taking, etc., are *per se* antilibertarian, and do not want to be associated with a view that defends these activities. If for no other reason, Grinder should hail my book as a strategic success, for he has been foremost in his hatred for these "libertarian" pests.

WALTER BLOCK
New York, N.Y.

And from the Reviewer

In that a good controversy is the surest way to boost the sales of a book, I'll gladly add what I can to this one. In so doing, I emphasize as my review apparently did not, that I have the warmest regard for Walter Block. I do wish him well. I hope, indeed, that Defending the Undefendable *rises to the best-seller list and stays there longer than the* McGuffey Reader. *I hope that happens. But I don't think it will. My reservations have nothing to do with wishing to deny anyone freedom, nor with being "stuffy." To the contrary (my tie notwithstanding), I am as sympathetic to most of Block's points as anyone. If other reviewers have failed to note the book's unfortunate flaws, it may be that they did not take it as seriously as I.*

The gist of the argument raised in the letters above is that my review was nitpicking for calling attention to Professor Block's use (or misuse) of the word "hero." This I freely admitted in the review. I said that the points I was raising were, in themselves, apparently "unimportant." But an accumulation of "unimportant" flaws tells in the final product. "Nits" must be picked. Normally, this is the editor's job. But it appears to have been hardly done in the case of Defending the Undefendable.

Professor Block states that he is free to stipulate any meaning he chooses for the word "hero." Of course he is. But it must be borne in mind that choosing a meaning contrary to that in common usage squanders the attention of the reader. Even more important, it squanders the reader's confidence in the author's judgment. To write, as Professor Block does, that a masochist squealing in delight at the shout of "Fire!" in a crowded theater is a "hero," is to stretch the word beyond its emotive elasticity. Society is of the opinion that such a character is a contemptible pervert. And it should be added, this nearly universal opinion is an informed opinion. Readers of Professor Block's book learn nothing new or extenuating to lessen their disgust for the masochist. The same is true in the instance of the drug addict. These examples do not sit well with those of the blackmailer, the pimp, the miser, and other "undefendables" about whom Block does *have interesting and illuminating points. He can explain why a food speculator is peforming a valuable service. He tells us why a miser is helping to raise our standard of living. But he can tell us nothing of the drug addict that is in any measure ennobling. According to Block's analysis, the drug addict, indeed, anyone, is "heroic" per se simply because he violates a law against harming himself. I immediately grant that the drug addict has every right to harm himself. That is not the question. What is at issue is whether merely violating an unjust law is enough to make one heroic. I answer emphatically no.*

Government is not the only evil in the world, it is merely a particularly noxious manifestation of a general stupidity. It should be the job of those of us who are concerned with bettering civilization to understand that. Otherwise, we shall be put in the sad position of concerning ourselves only with what others do to us, and not with what we are. I wonder whether we should accept the notion that any person who sinks into a stupor of morbid self-destruction, oblivious to the law, as to all else, is thereby rendered heroic. By Professor Block's definition, Rudolf Schwarzkogler would be a hero. He was the "artist" who defied the laws against suicide by carving away his own penis, a bit at a time, as an expression of "conceptual art." He bled to death.

That such a character, at once revolting and pathetic, would be a hero under the criteria of Defending the Undefendable *is exactly its trouble. People, I believe, want a good deal more of their heroes, even their stipulated ones. To that end, we have a right to ask a good deal more of Professor Block. His book demonstrates that he has a fertile mind. And in many sections it is well written. If I took him to task in my review, it was, I think, justly, because he failed to give us the benefit of his best effort throughout.*

JAMES DALE DAVIDSON
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Libertarian Cross-Currents

By Walter E. Grinder

• The **Libertarian Party** held its 1976 national convention at Washington's Statler Hilton Hotel the weekend of 23-26 September. I must admit to being both pleasantly surprised and deeply impressed. Until this convention, I have wavered between lukewarm toleration and almost total disenchantment. My twin objection has been (1) distrust of politics in general and (2) distaste for the abnormal number of assorted nuts, cranks, jerks, and crazies drawn, seemingly inexorably, toward any libertarian organization, but toward the Libertarian Party in particular. I remain suspicious of politics, but I am convinced that the LP is now and will for several years continue to be perhaps the single most effective libertarian mass educational tool in the country. (I hope and expect other parallel institutions to do at least equally well during the next decade or so.)

I was most heartened by the very small number of crazies in attendance at this year's convention. I was thoroughly impressed by the large number of young couples in their late twenties and thirties who obviously have their feet on the ground and are willing to put their shoulders to the wheel. These are dedicated, solid libertarians who are also what Murray Rothbard rightly calls "real people." I think it is safe to say that the appearance of such people is a very good indication that libertarianism is on the verge of laying the groundwork for a real mass movement.

The high points of the convention were speeches by **Earl C. Ravanel**, professor of American foreign policy at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and by **Roy A. Childs, Jr.**, long-time libertarian theoretician-activist. Both called for a strictly noninterventionist foreign policy.

There is simply no question but that the single largest cause of America's statism is the direct or indirect result of America's global interventionist foreign policy. It is marvelous indeed to see the LP shedding the last vestiges of mindless right-wing international adventurism and adopting the purely libertarian foreign policy of nonentangling alliances and defense only against direct continental attack. There must be a clear line drawn between conservatives (right-wing and social-democrat) and libertarians on this crucial issue. There is *no* place in the libertarian movement for international interventionists, for these interventionists are the most vicious and effective of all statists.

There is not space here to detail all of the other convention talks and panels, most of which were quite good. Especially good were the following: **Ralph Raico's** excellent "History of the Modern Libertarian Movement," **Morton Halperin's** "The CIA-FBI Threat to Privacy," a very high-level and informative panel on the Middle East by **John Hagel III, Leonard P. Liggio** and **Stephen Halbrook, Nathaniel Branden's** very useful "How to Communicate Political Ideas," a panel on Austrian economics by **John Egger**, myself, and **Murray Rothbard**, a rousing banquet speech by **Roger MacBride**, a further attempt by Walter Block to "Defend the Undefendables," and a rip-roaring call to action by "Mr Libertarian," Murray N. Rothbard, in his "Benediction." [All convention speeches and panels are available on cassette tapes. For more information, write Audio-Forum, 901 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314 Ed.]

My considered judgement is that the LP is professionally and well run and for the most part ideologically quite sound (although I am quite concerned about the policy of gradualism as expressed by MacBride in a recent *Reason* interview. It is up to all of us to keep the pressure on the party to ensure its ideological purity; but I am satisfied that the party leadership of Ed Crane, Bob Meier, Bill Evers, and the others is aware of the problem and that they will do their best to correct any possible ideological deviations in the future. I think the party leadership deserves both the thanks and the support of all serious libertarians for their yeomanlike service to the cause of liberty. This is especially true for Roger Lea MacBride, the tireless expositor of the libertarian message throughout the country. Because of the party and MacBride, more people have heard about libertarianism this past year than heard about it in the previous three decades. Now, if only the rest of us will do half as much, the growth of the libertarian movement, while remaining a difficult task will surely continue.

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AN AFTERWORD FROM Readers, Authors, Reviewers

Libertarian Jihad

I was very disappointed with Roy Childs' review of *Theistic Objectivism: An Autopsy* by Michael Emerling [*LR*, Sept.-Oct. '76]. Aside from Roy's snide and unwarranted reference to me—which, coming as it does from the chameleon of the libertarian movement, is not that surprising—the review fails to fulfill even the minimum requirement for a satisfactory review: it fails to tell us anything significant about the piece being reviewed. We learn that it is a criticism of James Kiefer, and we learn that Roy does not like it—but surely it does not take a 500-word review to communicate these two points.

I have listened to the Kiefer lecture, and I am at a loss to understand Roy's allegation that Emerling "missed the point entirely." "Emerling's statement of [Kiefer's] views," claims Roy, "is simply unrecognizable to me." This is especially strange, since Emerling's monograph rarely resorts to paraphrase, but relies instead on quoting long passages from Kiefer directly. Are these verbatim statements "unrecognizable" to Roy?

Roy's opinions may be interesting, but his review presents nothing but opinions, totally unsubstantiated. If he had pontificated less and confronted the issues more, he would have had the space necessary for at least one example, or clue, or hint—*anything* to lend credence to his rejection of the monograph. As it stands, however, the review is vacuous, and it is a discredit to Roy's fine talents as a reviewer.

GEORGE H. SMITH
Hollywood, Calif.

When I read Michael Emerling's *Theistic Objectivism: An Autopsy*, I was amazed to see that, although he quoted in full James Kiefer's most controversial (and, I think, most decisive) argument for the existence of God, he nowhere attempted to refute it. Rather, he grappled with no fewer than six reconstructions of it, none of them accurate, and so revealed that he simply had not seen what the argument was. I was horrified when he quoted one of Kiefer's counter-arguments and omitted a key word, which omission permitted him to find an elementary "contradiction" in Kiefer's position. I was puzzled by his quoting most of the other important counter-arguments, excepting the most forceful one, which he doesn't even paraphrase, though he quotes or paraphrases surrounding material. And I was completely at a loss when, in his rebuttals to Kiefer's several objections to Branden's lecture, he time and time again missed the point and answered caricatures of the arguments. Roy Childs, then, was absolutely correct in his main criticism of the piece.

There were, however, some puzzling aspects to that review. I am one of the Washington-area libertarians converted to theism by Kiefer's Audio-Forum tape *Objectivism and Theism* (and later to Christianity, mostly under the influence of arguments presented by Jim Kiefer, albeit not included on his tape), and I am one of the two persons with whom, along with Jim Kiefer, Childs has had "long discussions." Roy and I have been close friends for a long time, and he knows that those of us who have thus become Christians are not "disciples" of James Kiefer, nor do we in any sense form a group "centering around the ideas and person of Mr. James Kiefer." To paraphrase Archbishop Ramsey, it is not Mr. Kiefer we are commending, but Jesus Christ, whose servants we are. Roy Childs knows this, and yet chose to depict us as a Kieferite cult of some sort.

From our long discussions, he knows that we are not asking a Kantian question, but rather a Brandenian question: What implications, if any, does the fact that consciousness is conscious have for theories of the origin of consciousness? I suppose that Roy has recast this question into its correct Kantian parallel, but he knows better than to depict us as Kantians. Even Michael Emerling did not make that mistake.

And why, from a jest which he knew to be a jest, he chose to impute a "canonization" of *Atlas Shrugged* onto us, I cannot imagine.

On one other point the review is a puzzle. Roy seems, at the end of the review, to regard the issue of God's existence as unimportant. Roy Childs used to know better than that, too.

RONN NEFF
Alexandria, Va.

My tape, *Objectivism and Theism,* opens with a parallel between Dr. Branden's refutation of determinism and a refutation of atheism.

Summarizing Dr. Branden: Determinists claim that a man's thoughts are due to causal chains originating outside the man. But if this is so—"if the actions and content of his mind are determined by factors that may or may not have anything to do with reason"—then there is no reason why these thoughts should be true, except by happy accident. Our minds, with their thoughts determined by extraneous factors, are no more suitable guides to truth than tea leaves, with their patterns determined by extraneous factors. But the conclusion (that our thoughts are worthless) is absurd, therefore the premise (determinism) is false.

Summarizing the parallel argument: If atheism is true, then our having the sorts of minds we do, or having minds at all, is due to "factors that may or may not have anything to do with reason." It follows that our thoughts are worthless. Since the conclusion is absurd, the premise (atheism) is false.

I then examine several objections to the latter arguments, and reject each on the ground, among others, that if it were valid it would be a valid objection to Dr. Branden's argument as well. I conclude that no one can consistently accept Objectivism and reject theism. All this occupies about the first 39 minutes of the tape.

It is with some surprise that I have read Mr. Emerling's critique of my tape and discovered no reference whatever to Dr. Branden's argument!

Later, in discussing Dr. Branden's discussion of the First Cause Argument, I maintain that a statement like "The basement is flooded because it rained last night" implies that it makes sense to talk about what would have happened if it had not rained last night. More generally, to say that A caused B is to say that without A we should not have B. Mr. Emerling interprets this to mean that I regard the flooding basement as a mysterious, uncaused event. He accuses me of believing that hydrogen and oxygen will sometimes produce water and sometimes Pepsi Cola, whereas my point is that hydrogen and oxygen produce water, but nitrogen and oxygen do not.

Mr. Childs complains that Mr. Emerling has not taken sufficient time and care with the argument. This is over-harsh. It seems clear to me that he has devoted considerable time and care to his paper, and some of his incidental points are well-taken. I am all the more disappointed at not getting from him any analysis of my main arguments.

JAMES KIEFER
Bethesda, Md.

Roy Childs' review of *Theistic Objectivism: An Autopsy* leaves much to be desired—notably evidence, argument, and and attempt to examine the contents of the pamphlet. The review, however, is not without significance. It is a striking example of a key epistemological principle, viz., the burden of proof.

Mr. Childs asserts that I neither grasp nor accurately state James Kiefer's argument for the existence of God. He offers no evidence or argument in support of this claim. He provides no examples of my alleged errors. Nor does he quote or paraphrase any part of the pamphlet in defense of his view. Roy simply makes a series of ex cathedra pronouncements regarding *Theistic Objectivism: An Autopsy* —and assumes that readers will take his word on the matter.

But intellectual issues are not decided by appeals to reputation or seeming authority. They are decided by means of evidence and argument. To paraphrase Etienne Gilson, "Reason always buries its undertakers."

Until Childs offers evidence for his opinions, they need not be taken seriously. As Nathaniel Branden has observed, "When a person makes an assertion for which no rational grounds are given, his statement is—epistemologically—without cognitive content. It is as though nothing

Letters from readers are welcome. Although only a selection can be published and none can be individually acknowledged, each will receive editorial consideration and may be passed on to reviewers and authors. Letters submitted for publication should be brief, typed, double spaced, and sent to LR, *901 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314.*

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movie, *The Incredible Bread Machine*, continues to grow in influence. The San Diego group has adapted the movie to a one-hour television special. According to *Advertising Age* (4 October 1976), **World Research, Inc.**, is offering to TV stations free use of this hour-long special, which includes an opening statement by Secretary of the Treasury **William E. Simon** and closing discussion by **Walter W. Heller, Milton Friedman**, and **Benjamin Rogge**.

•The **Mont Pelerin Society** (an organization of international free market scholars and businessmen) held its 1976 meeting at St. Andrews, Scotland (St. Andrews University), 22-28 August. The entire meeting was devoted to the life, times, and ideas of Adam Smith. Sessions included papers and discussion by Professors **R.H. Coase, George Stigler, Benjamin Rogge, Israel Kirzner, B.R. Shenoy, Armen Alchien, Gordon Tullock, James Buchanan, Milton Friedman, David Meiselman, Gerald P. O'Driscoll, F.A. Hayek, Donald Kemmerer**, and **Murray N. Rothbard.**

•The week following the Mont Pelerin meeting, another very important symposium in Austrian economics took place at England's famous Windsor Castle. High-quality papers were delivered by, among others, **Mario Rizzo** of New York University, **Gerald P. O'Driscoll** of Iowa State University, **John Egger** of Goucher College, and **Roger Garrison** of the University of Virginia. Comments were offered by Professors **Kirzner, Lachmann, Rothbard**, and **Spadaro.**

•The growth of interest in and influence of Austrian economics has been truly amazing during the last two or three years. The Austrian programs developed and organized by the **Institute for Humane Studies**, the **Charles G. Koch Foundation**, and the **William Koch Foundation** clearly have been the major factors in this resurgence of interest. Hats off to all of those involved with these very successful programs.

•Reflecting this growing interest in the Austrian perspective are some recent announcements from **Arlington House Publishers** (165 Huguenot Street, New Rochelle, NY 10801). Arlington is bringing back into print three classic works of Ludwig von Mises: **Omnipotent Government** ($8.95), **Theory and History** ($10), and **Bureaucracy** ($6). three titles will be available in late November.

In January Arlington House will publish *My Years with Ludwig von Mises,* the fascinating memoirs of the great economist's wife, Margit. Illustrated with many never-before-published photographs, this delightful volume will sell for $9.95.

Even more exciting is the news that Arlington's Washington editor, *LR*'s own **Karl Pflock**, has acquired the English-language rights to the never-before-translated collection of Mises essays, *Critique of Interventionism.* The English-language translation was done for Arlington House by Professor **Hans Sennholz**. The Arlington edition of *Critique*, due for publication sometime next year, will contain six essays, including "The Nationalization of Credit" (which was left out of the original German edition because of an editorial error), and an introduction by Professor Sennholz.

•I am convinced that the renaissance in Austrian economics is just beginning and will continue to grow in the months and years ahead. The graduate program at **New York University**, where **Israel Kirzner, Ludwig Lachmann**, and **Mario Rizzo** teach, is one of the most exciting in the country. The students there include some of the brightest and most dedicated libertarian scholars I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. They include: **Richard Ebeling, Richard Fink, Jack High, John Kunze**, and **Donald Lavoie.**

•**Carl Watner** is one of the best independent scholars in the libertarian movement. His work on Benjamin Tucker and Lysander Spooner is generally recognized to be excellent by all. Watner now has written and published a very useful pamphlet, *Towards A Proprietary Theory of Justice.* The 47-page work is worth far more than its $3 price. Please address all orders. inquiries, and correspondence to: Carl Watner, 7250 Washington Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21227.

•Professor **John Hospers** is giving several important addresses over the next several months: (1) "A Defense of Minimal Government" will be delivered at the annual meeting of the Society for the Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy at Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa, 5-6 November 1976. The entire session will be devoted to the Nozick thesis, and Hospers will be one of the very few there to defend against the redistributionists. (2) "Is Free Enterprise Compatible with Social Justice?" will be delivered at a symposium on social philosophy at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 12-13 November 1976. (3) "The Ethics of Retributivism" is an address that will be delivered at a conference organized and directed by the **Center for Libertarian Studies** (200 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10003) and held at the Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 4-7 March 1977. The symposium is entitled "Crime and Punishment: Restitution, Retribution and the Law." This conference is the first on this topic to be organized and directed by a libertarian scholarly institution, and thus the Center for Libertarian Studies is breaking new ground on a very important subject.

•Gentle reader, the success of this column depends entirely upon *you.* "Libertarian Cross-Currents" cannot serve as a clearing house of libertarian scholarship and action unless you give me your input. Please help me help you by sending me information (c/o *Libertarian Review*, 901 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314) on academic activities, recommended reading, new publications, organizational activities, speakers, and so on. And remember, *LR* is a bimonthly publication. When you send along information about meetings, talks, conferences, and the like, be sure to give me *at least six weeks* lead-time before the cover date of the issue in which you want your announcement to appear (e.g., for the January-February '77 issue the deadline was 18 November).

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has been said." From this perspective, Roy's review is remarkably silent.

MICHAEL EMERLING
Tucson, Ariz.

Childs Elucidates

My little review of Michael Emerling's Theistic Objectivism *seems to have stirred up a hornet's nest. Let me take another crack at the problem as I see it.*

James Kiefer delivered a couple of lectures in the Washington, D.C., area on Objectivism and theism, in which he maintained that Objectivism leads to theism. So far as I have been able to determine, only a few dozen people, at best, have heard the arguments, and only two or three have been converted to theism by them. It is this situation *which Michael Emerling has responded to by writing and privately publishing his lengthy rejoinder. My point is that if he was authentically concerned to rebut the arguments, he should have best done this in private correspondence–or at least shown the pamphlet to the principals in the dispute before publication. He did not. The result is that in my judgment, and in the judgments of Ronn Neff and James Kiefer, Michael Emerling missed the point of the arguments, instead wrestling with several alternative constructions. This does no one any good.*

I agree that I was a bit sarcastic in my review of Theistic Objectivism, *but that is my right. Mr. Kiefer suggests that I am "over-harsh," but I disagree totally. Mr. Emerling's pamphlet is rude, insulting towards Mr. Kiefer and those who believe in God; Mr. Emerling shows off his refutational prowess like a flashy boy Objectivist even while, as he often does, caricaturing Kiefer's arguments. He spits contempt, postures melodramatically, and constantly engages in silly rhetorical flourishes. This is his right, and I am entitled to ridicule it.*

If I did not discuss the arguments in my initial review, it is because I didn't have the space in a 400-word review, and because I thought it was pointless. I advised that those who are interested in the issue listen to Mr. Kiefer's tape and read Mr. Emerling's pamphlet and make up their own minds. As for whether Mr. Emerling did in fact miss the point, well, George Smith and I have had lengthy telephone conversations about that question, and we still disagree: he thinks Emerling's comments were on the mark, and I think not. Again, the reader will have to decide for himself.

I certainly did not mean to take a swipe at George Smith in my review. In my view, his Atheism: The Case Against God *is a magnificent book, worthy of standing alongside such works as Flew's* God and Philosophy *and Blanshard's masterly* Reason and Belief. *I was more intending to ridicule Michael Emerling's intellectual horizons, which I take to be very narrow, to put it charitably.*

If I have been overly harsh towards Michael Emerling, then I apologize, but I do not think I have been. For whatever reason, a great many highly intelligent followers of Ayn Rand have, in my view, simply become self-exiles from the great public debates of our time. They seem to prefer to be big fish in fishbowls rather than small fish where it really counts and might affect the course of events. They become narrow, constricted, shallow. I have seen this happen again and again over the last ten or twelve years: the falling off from intellectual concerns of people who might make a difference in our time, because of sectarian concerns. It does no one any good to disregard this fact, one of the preeminent reasons for the all-too-slow progress of Liberty as well as its rational philosophical and ideological base. I am not immune to such criticisms myself.

This was really the point of my review. There is a sense in which Ronn Neff is wrong: I do *regard the issue of God's existence as unimportant, because God does not exist. What is important is the belief which many people have in God, and in other religious matters. But Neff is wrong when he reads* that *into my review. What my review expressed was my view that Emerling's* pamphlet *was unimportant. I stand by that.*

As for Kiefer's argument, all that I can say here is that his dichotomy between "design" and "accident" as alternative explanations for the origin of man's consciousness is rather loosely defined. "Accident" is not a concept that applies to the way things act in the world. Moreover, Mr. Kiefer rejects natural *explanations of the origins of consciousness without anything other than a cursory analysis, mostly of Darwinian explanations. Yet there is much more to the natural postulates than is contained in the works and traditions of Darwin. Note, for example, D. O. Hebb's* The Organization of Behavior, *F. A. Hayek's* The Sensory Order, *and the first two volumes of Suzanne Langer's* Mind: An Essay in Human Feeling. *But those only scratch the surface.*

*In conclusion, then, I view Mr. Kiefer's arguments as being spurious, and Mr. Emerling's pamphlet as having missed their force anyway. I remain an atheist, and for the life of me, I cannot see how, asking themselves the Kantian-*type *question "How is the fidelity of consciousness to fact possible?" Mr. Kiefer, Mr. Neff, and others have reasoned their way into the Trinity, chastity, and Sunday mass. As someone who respects the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, and who respects Rand, I see the efficacy of consciousness as axiomatic, and the explanations of its origin to lie in natural science. This is not intended as a rebuttal, but merely an indication of my own point of view. For interested readers, I urge consideration of the works I have cited, including the Kiefer and Emerling works.*

ROY CHILDS, JR.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

On Target

My appreciation to *Libertarian Review* and to Reginald Bretnor for the kind words and stirring resuscitation of my *To Keep and Bear Arms* in Mr. Bretnor's gun-control piece for September-October.

The piece was excellent, and I believe typifies not only the libertarian thinking on guns but also what genuine liberals, of that vanishing school, should be thinking.

Best regards.

BILL DAVIDSON
Alamosa, Col.

Kudos

This note is simply to compliment you on your recent reviews of *Against Our Will* (by Myra Friedman) and *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* (by Regina Hugo). [Both in the Jul.-Aug. '76 *LR* –Ed.]

Ms Friedman not only wrote an informed review, but she managed to capture in it some of the difficulties someone like myself would have to face in dealing with the book. That Brownmiller writes well and spots some of the indecencies men have exhibited in their relations with women simply cannot be denied. Since she writes in part as spokeswoman for a movement, her overstatements, her emotionalism (cast in imaginative and prosaic language), and her determination tend to prompt tolerance for her ignorance and sheer idiocy. However much I would like to be above it, given my knowledge of the indecency of men against women–for example, in my experiences in the U.S. Air Force, where the general attitude my fellow airmen expressed toward all women, including their lovers or wives, simply baffled and often disgusted me–I found it difficult to protest the Brownmiller approach. Frankly, I am intimidated. My sense of justice (i.e., objectivity) is difficult to assert in the face of the statistics. But Ms Friedman did a commendable job of moderation in the face of Brownmiller's seductive style I wish I could have managed such a courageous feat.

With Ms Hugo's review I can do little more than express my heartfelt thanks. Professor Langer's book(s) have been a source of philosophical joy to me, and I have thought of doing her work justice in a review, but never dared. Ms Hugo managed to convey the richness of this philosopher's work without attempting to cover the territory Professor Langer alone travelled so diligently and well. May I simply reaffirm that *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* is breathtaking and brilliant–but not meant for those who wish for philosophy to reap its fruits exactly at 9:00 AM tomorrow. (I am fearful that the impatience some libertarians exhibit toward certain intellectual endeavors will be the death of liberty!)

Thanks, then, again.

TIBOR R. MACHAN
Senior Editor, *Reason*
Fedonia, N.Y.

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Tape No. 200 THE LIBERTARIAN TEMPERAMENT / Professor John Hospers, 1972 presidential candidate of the Libertarian Party, Chairman of the University of Southern California's School of Philosophy, author and lecturer, *contrasts the bureaucratic and libertarian temperaments*. The bureaucrat is supposed to provide a service, but his actions usually only interfere with the production of goods and services. He is the wielder of coercive power over the lives of other men.

Libertarians are people who don't want to be beholden to anyone or vice versa. They desire to be sole guardians of their lives. They do not seek to oppress, nor do they want to be oppressed, since, Hospers points out oppression is an unnatural condition.

Hospers' analysis of the underlying philosophy of libertarianism in contrast to that of bureaucrats and academicians is effectively demonstrated through dozens of vivid examples. Truly an excellent, informative tape. **(50 Min. / $9.95)**

Tape No. 206 VICTIMLESS CRIMES / Nathaniel Branden is well known as the author of *The Psychology of Self-Esteem, Breaking Free* and, most recently, *The Disowned Self*.

Branden defines libertarianism as a moral-political position concerned with the rights and freedom of the individual. Its basic tenet is that it is *morally wrong to initiate force against anyone*. Most people, he feels, have no quarrel, unfortunately, with initiating force; they merely differ over which ideas to enforce on society.

One example of forcing ideas on others arises when society declares the illegality of *certain actions by an individual* which do not involve harm to or coercion for anyone else, which are crimes only by definition of law—victimless crimes. To the libertarian these laws make no sense, since crime cannot be properly viewed outside the context of coercion of one individual by another. *The libertarian holds that moral interference* where consenting adults are involved is wrong when no one else is injured. Branden then notes the relationship of interference by society in moral questions with interference in the economic sphere.

Examples of crimes in the victimless category are those *against marijuana*, regulation of sexual practices, etc. Branden also discusses the concept of involuntary commitment of so-called mental patients. He notes the importance of applying the basic libertarian principle of the wrongness of coercion uniformly to problems. **(58 Min. / $9.95)**

Tape No. 155 WHY SOCIALISM ALWAYS FAILS / In this, the only authorized tape recording of the late Ludwig von Mises, he sums up a lifetime of study of socialism and proves beyond any doubt *that capitalism* is the only system that allows man to unleash his creative powers. **(88 Min. / $9.95)**

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Tape No. 186 LIBERTARIANS DEBATE WITH THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY / John Hospers and Roy Childs, both well known libertarians, define Socialism as the imposition of centralized planning and coercion on the *entire population resulting in a life planned* not by you, but for you. The real test of a nation's freedom is stated as how much one is allowed to do without government interference. In this debate with two members of the Socialist Workers Party, libertarianism is described as the idea that the individual is supreme, that no one has the right to run another's life or make decisions for him. **(132 Min. / $20.90)**

Tape No. 172 THE ETHICS OF LIBERTARIANISM / Professor of economics at Baruch College, Libertarian Party nominee for New York State Assembly in 1972, Walter Block is well known among libertarians. He defines libertarianism as "the philosophical view that it is immoral to commit aggression against non-aggressors." He further explains that what sets libertarians apart is the consistency with which they apply their principles. For example, the libertarians oppose the draft as violating the concept of one's rights to his body. He opposes taxation as a form of robbery and offers sound arguments to prove that many services performed by the state—the postal service, for example—could be handled more efficiently through private means. There is humor here and interest too. **(41 Min. / $9.95)**

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